

妹さへいればいい。

平坂
読

イラスト／カントク

1



Imouto Sae Ireba Ii — Volume 01

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妹さへいれはーじい。

平坂
読

イラスト／カントク

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GAGAGA

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平坂 読

イラスト／カントク





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しいしい妹 しれさえ。 ○ば

1

平坂 読

イラスト／カントク

羽島伊月 (はしま・いつき)
究極の妹を追い求める小説家。

羽島千尋 (はしま・ちひろ)
伊月の弟。完璧超人。

可児那由多 (かに・なゆた)
天才作家。行動原理は100%伊月への愛。

白川京 (しらかわ・みやこ)
伊月と同じ年の女子大学生。

不破春斗 (ふわ・はると)
伊月と同期デビューのイケメン作家。

土岐健次郎 (とき・けんじろう)
伊月の担当編集者。

恵那刹那 (えな・せつな)
天才イラストレーター。P.N. はぱりけつ。

大野アシュリー (おおの・あしゅりー)
税理士。



Chapter 1

The Light Novel author is a crazed siscon!

“Onii-chan wakie wakie~”

I opened my eyes to the gentle voice, and before me stood Alice, completely naked.

My little sister Alice, turning 14 this year, with silky golden hair atop a face of dazzling red pupils not unlike a ruby was a truly indescribable beauty.

“Nn...good morning Alice.” Still a bit dazed from just waking up, I greeted a giggling Alice.

“Onii-chan still looks a bit sleepy hya~ Something needs to be done to fix such an energy deprived Onii-chan— ”

My little sister’s face rapidly advanced towards mine, and then — *kiss*

“.....!!”

As Alice pressed her heavenly soft lips to mine, I was instantly awakened.

“Are you awake now? Onii-chan.” With a mischievous smile, a tinge of red surfaced on her cheeks.

“I specially prepared a handmade breakfast for you today. So hurry up before it gets cold~.”

“Ahh I got it.”

The stark-naked Alice nodded her head happily in response, and quickly exited the room with her perfectly round butt swaying to her rhythm.

Even though it was a morning scene repeated countless times by now, it was a routine that never grew old.

Wanting to taste the breakfast my little sister had personally prepared, I bolted into the restroom she had gone into before, washed my face from the water left over from her bath, and dried it with her still warm bra.

I made my way towards the dining table, surprised that Yoshiko, who was supposed to be dead from what happened yesterday, was present.

“Here Onii-chan, eat up~” The patiently waiting Alice prompted me with a smile.

“Oh. Thank you for the food~”

Alice’s egg omelet was an excellent piece of art just like each and every one had been before. Her delicious milk also defied the general concept of milk itself.

My little sister’s freshly produced eggs with her squeezed milk was really something else.

“Ah, Onii-chan, you got ketchup around your mouth~. Can’t be helped nya~. Eh...something to wipe with...something to wipe with...”

Alice picked up a pair of recently worn panties from the gate to the Parallel World and proceeded to clean my mouth. I was assaulted with the sweet fragrance of my little sister from the Parallel World.

I really wanted to eat those panties... munch munch. Umm, I caught it in my mouth. munch munch nibble nibble.

My little sister’s panties were really delicious~~

Alice looked on towards me with a slightly troubled face as I unconsciously finished her whole panties.

“Jeez~ If Onii-chan wants to eat panties so bad then I’ll have to prepare stir-fried freshly worn panties with milk, won’t I? Please look forward to lunch~!”

.....

“WHAT THE HELL IS THIS ----- !!”

"Wuh?! Wh-what's this all of a sudden??" The shocked Itsuki asked the source of the sudden shriek, Toki, who had also slammed the manuscript onto the table in surprise.

"Don't 'What's this all of a sudden' me! ...wh,what's with this insane world... I think something may be wrong with the brain here..." Toki commented in a rough voice.

"Fu...Seems like the masterpiece drawn up by your's truly, has impressed you greatly."

"Th,This...freaking idiot..."

Toki's face twisted in disgust as Itsuki folded his arms and grinned arrogantly.

Itsuki —— Hashima Itsuki was a light novel author.

He was 20 years old with a slightly smaller build. Although he wasn't doing so good with eyesight, what was left of the innocence in his face was covered up by a shameless expression that was capable of ticking off anyone, anywhere at any time.

Itsuki had been using his real name to sign off his works since he did not have a pen name.

The other individual, Toki Genjirou, was the editor in charge of Itsuki, and was 26 years old.

Dressed in a suit with glasses, he had the look of a real man.

The light novel author and the editor were in what is known as an arranged meeting. Though it could have been done through mail or by phone, it was also possible for Itsuki to meet with Toki face to face, allowing for the old-fashioned printout manuscript and the observation of the reader's reactions.

The two of them were inside Itsuki's apartment. Because the apartment building was located only a mere 5 minute walk from the Publisher's office where Toki worked, it was rather common for them to meet like this.

".....Just to make sure....this is, without question, the manuscript for the 2nd volume of 'The Scarlet Jäger (Name Subjected to change)', right?" Toki inquired with a worn-out voice.

“Of course.”

Toki’s face distorted as Itsuki answered without missing a beat. “.....I-isn’t it weird—? Volume 2 starts with the heroine appearing randomly in the protagonist’s house, while she supposedly died when saving him from the devil in volume 1? Isn’t this a bit...too...”

“Fu, Too perfect, right? It beautifully follows the plotline.”

“Where in hell does this even remotely connect to the original plotline?!”

Itsuki frowned a bit as Toki frustratingly slammed down on the table

“Isn’t a good surprise for the protagonist following the plot? The one who supposedly died yesterday....Uhm....what was the name again...”

“Why of all things would you forget the name of your own main heroine?! It’s Yoshiko! Yoshiko!! Also, what are you going to do for the name of the Jäger fighting battles in the dark world..... Well....It’s true that at first “Surprised that Yoshiko who was supposed to be dead from what happened yesterday was present.” seems out of place, but I guess it’s a pretty innovative style of writing...though those who aren’t careful readers might not feel the same.”

“Oh my.....Editors are easily troubled by these things eh? Don’t worry, I have taken measures in the story. If the readers don’t notice, then at the end they will say that ‘There wasn’t any foreshadowing’ or ‘The story was pretty rough.’”

“How is that supposed to be of any reassurance?!”

Toki roughened his voice at a slightly sighing Itsuki,
fuu..... with this, his breathing finally calmed down.

“.....While Yoshiko’s reappearance seems to be standing out the most, it isn’t the biggest problem.”

“What?”

As Toki tapped the manuscript firmly with his middle finger, “What is with this new character called Alice!? I haven’t heard anything about a character like this being part of the story!”

“The protagonist’s little sister. In the character description, it clearly states

that he had a little sister.”

“The words really flow out of your mouth heh?! Not much else was written about her so I thought she was merely a small supporting character.....Just what is this monster.....!!”

“Cutest-level monster, isn’t she. Fuhaha!”

“That’s not it, idiot!! Ahhh shit!! First off, it’s already weird enough that her default was stark nude, but...isn’t there something terribly wrong with this depiction?? A naked figure appearing from a hazy view suddenly, such high-level exposition skills!! And on top of it all, the protagonists just naturally dries his face with his little sister’s bra and proceeds to eat her panties?! What an inconceivable pervert....no, he is a definitely 100% creep!I’m just asking now, but what exactly was the typo between bread and panties about...?”^[1]

“What a foolish question you ask, such highly skilled author such as I would not make such a newbie mistake.”

“Is that right then? Damn it!!Anyways this ‘Milk of Alice’ is...”

“It’s just how I wrote it, the milk comes from the breasts of Alice. It’s very appetizing.”

“And these ‘Eggs of Alice’....?”

“Freshly produced by Alice, it’s 10x more delicious than what you can imagine, being almost on the same level as caviar.Not that I like caviar that much to begin with.”

“Hahaha, as I expected, this protagonist along with his little sister are both totally demented psychos! And then the craziest one would be yourself, who created these characters, even though from the beginning you described the protagonist as ‘A normal high school student who was born into and grew up in an ordinary household’! Yet at the spotlight of this lunatic household is the demented heroine who overshadowed the main antagonist himself from the moment she appeared!”

Facing Toki’s anger billowing as high as a tsunami, even Itsuki himself had to twitch an eyebrow.

"Mwu..... Now that you went and said it...I guess the part about the eggs and milk is a 'little' overboard.... But as it is a fictional action story, I thought that 'somewhat' surreal details are within the boundaries..."

"A little'...? 'Somewhat'...?"

Then Itsuki said to a trembling Toki, "Isn't it often the case? For example, the protagonist's relative is actually a legendary adventurer, or the only surviving successor to an ancient art of warfare, and offers to pass it onto our hero."

"Did you not think at all how crazy traits such as producing eggs or eating panties would fit in the standard configuration of an action manga...!"

As Toki rubbed his temples out of frustration, Itsuki continued on timidly, "...B, but, going into the washroom your little sister was in previously and washing your face with the leftover water, isn't it common for households with little sisters?"

"I'll be damned to hell if that was true for even a split second, you crazed siscon!!" Toki cried out with all his strength.

妹

Hashima Itsuki. When he was 16 years old he debuted as a Light Novel author, during his 2nd year of high school, after winning the Annual Newcomer's competition. It had been 3 years since then, and he had written 5 singles and 3 whole series, totaling to around 20 books published in all.

Though he had completed some of the stories before his debut, being able to publish 20 books in 3 years time was a really impressive feat nonetheless. Because he was able to work at such a fast pace without losing any quality in his works, he had been picking up fans left and right.

He had also been featured repeatedly in the top 10 of the weekly original content ranking, which arguably made him one of the most popular light novel authors in Japan.

Writing speed, imagination, Story organization, character design, Itsuki possessed everything essential to a successful writing career—but, his recent works didn't seem to be selling as well as his previous ones had.

In every one of his works, the main heroine was the ‘Little sister’.

Even though the little sister character was a pretty safe route and albeit a popular one to take, readers would start to get tired and eventually say “This again?”.

Itsuki himself had resolved to make his heroines ‘The little sister that stands out from all little sisters’, and so as his works grew in numbers, the heroines quickly became ‘peaky’. Recently, the affectionate views towards the protagonist’s little sister had spread like wildfire, and hooked many readers in large numbers.

And on top of this, Itsuki strived for another major breakthrough, abandoning his old style of ‘Heroine Little sister.’ He challenged himself to create a new style of character. Due to this, and partially because of Toki’s insistence, he created a new series called ‘The Scarlet Jäger (Name subjected to change)’. However, it seemed like it only amounted to a creation of a terrifying monster.
[2]

“Geez...His siscon tendencies are really troublesome...”

Toki Genjirou sighed repeatedly while on the road back to the publisher’s office. In the cold January weather, his breath could be seen.

Then, “Ah, Toki-san, good afternoon.”

The owner of the clear voice was a teenager with a smaller build and a wind breaker. Swinging from his arms were groceries from a nearby supermarket.

“Ah, Chihiro-kun, good afternoon,” Toki returned the greeting.

“I just met with your brother in his apartment.”

“Is that so? Thank you for always taking care of him.”

"You're too kind."

Teenage boy—Hashima Chihiro, Itsuki's kid brother.

1st year of high school. With his semi-short black hair and smooth white face, he was very pleasing to the eye. In Itsuki's words, he was an academic genius and very capable in sports, being almost comparable to Superman himself.

The residence of Itsuki's parents was 20 minutes away by bus. Chihiro often made the trip to help around the apartment of his brother, and so had met Toki before.

"Did you come to make dinner tonight?"

"Yes, that's correct."

".....Geez, Itsuki really has a very caring brother, I'm starting to get a little jealous." As Toki inadvertently said what he was thinking out loud, Chihiro's face deepened in color.

"...Such things...it's not like that..." Chihiro muttered in embarrassment

"Well then, I'll take my leave. Please continue to support my brother." Chihiro bided farewell politely as he turned to walk towards Itsuki's apartment.

As Toki looked on to the shrinking figure, he began thinking.

He is barely a highschool student, yet he already has such courtesy, whether be it a lax or sober situation. He also possesses such advanced skill in cuisine, and is already so responsible as to tend to his slothful brother. He really is the perfect little brother to have.

"....If Chihiro-kun wasn't born as a boy but as a girl, maybe Itsuki wouldn't have turned out to be such a siscon.... If only he had a little sister (Imouto sae ireba)....no. I can't ignore the fact that if that was the case, Itsuki might not have become an author.....This is an unexpectedly tough question to answer."

A few minutes after the meeting with Toki,
Itsuki opened the front door at the ringing of the chime. Because they had agreed beforehand, Itsuki already knew about Chihiro's arrival.

“.....oh”

“Yes.”



“.....Nn.”

With a conversation that can't even be classified as one, Itsuki invited Chihiro inside.

Even though they were brothers, there existed an awkward atmosphere between them.

Their relationship had started after Itsuki's father had married Chihiro's mother 3 years ago—The same year as Itsuki's debut.

In their 2nd year of High school and 1st year of Middle school, the period where emotions started to surface, they were thrust together and told they were brothers.

Not sure how to accept this fact at first, they merely considered the other to be an individual whom they shared the house with.

When Itsuki enrolled in college and moved out, the status quo was broken.

Even though the college itself was a mere 10 minutes from the house, he independently rented a room of an apartment building so he could work on his novels while commuting to school.

Eventually, he dropped out of his college in the middle of the first year, but because the publisher's office was nearby, he continued to live in the apartment.

Chihiro started coming over to Itsuki's apartment from the very start, bringing along bags of rice and other food, but after Itsuki dropped out Chihiro began coming more often, and even extended services to include making meals and cleaning around the house.

After becoming a full-time writer, Itsuki picked up his pace once again and began writing at amazing speed. But at the same time, his living habits also dropped in quality. With his everyday rhythm being scrambled and falling apart, his room gradually reached the point where the mess could no longer be ignored.

“It'll be done soon, so please be patient until then.”

“.....ooh.”

The apron-equipped Chihiro expertly handled the kitchen utensils and tools and began the cooking.

‘Taptaptap.’ The sounds of Itsuki writing his light novel on his notebook computer could be heard while he glanced sideways at Chihiro.

Chihiro finished after 30 minutes and the two brothers gathered at the table.

““Thank you for the food.”” After the two of them said thanks with their hands together, they began to dig in.

It was stir-fried shrimp in chili sauce, Hachita Karana, and fried rice. It really was quite the complete meal, and the quality of the food was also top-class. The chopsticks quickly began picking the plates clean.

Chihiro couldn’t help but allow a slight smile surface on his face as he looked on towards his brother eagerly feasting away. He was only eating dinner, yet somehow it seemed as if it would make an award-winning picture.

Attractive face and figure, straight A’s in school, sports prodigy, amazing chef, responsible around the house, and gentle mannered. Chihiro possessed all these traits, so it wouldn’t have been much of an exaggeration to call him the perfect human being.

As a brother, no, as a man, it was impossible for Itsuki to suppress his inferiority complex. As a result, sometimes Itsuki unintentionally became a bit stingy.

“.....Hey Chihiro. Every time I see you you’re working harder than the last, don’t you have anything else better to do? For example....a date with your girlfriend?”

Chihiro’s expression sobered a bit.

“I don’t have such things.”

“Is that so.”

“Mhm.”

Chihiro wasn’t the unpopular type, so it was not that he couldn’t, but more

that he would't.

"Why don't you?"

".....I don't really have a reason to have one." For some reason, Chihiro pouted a bit as he said that.

"Even more...I'm worried about you Onii-san."

"I, I don't need you to worry at all!"

Chihiro sighed slightly.

".....I wouldn't have to worry if Onii-san would become more responsible and take care of yourself."

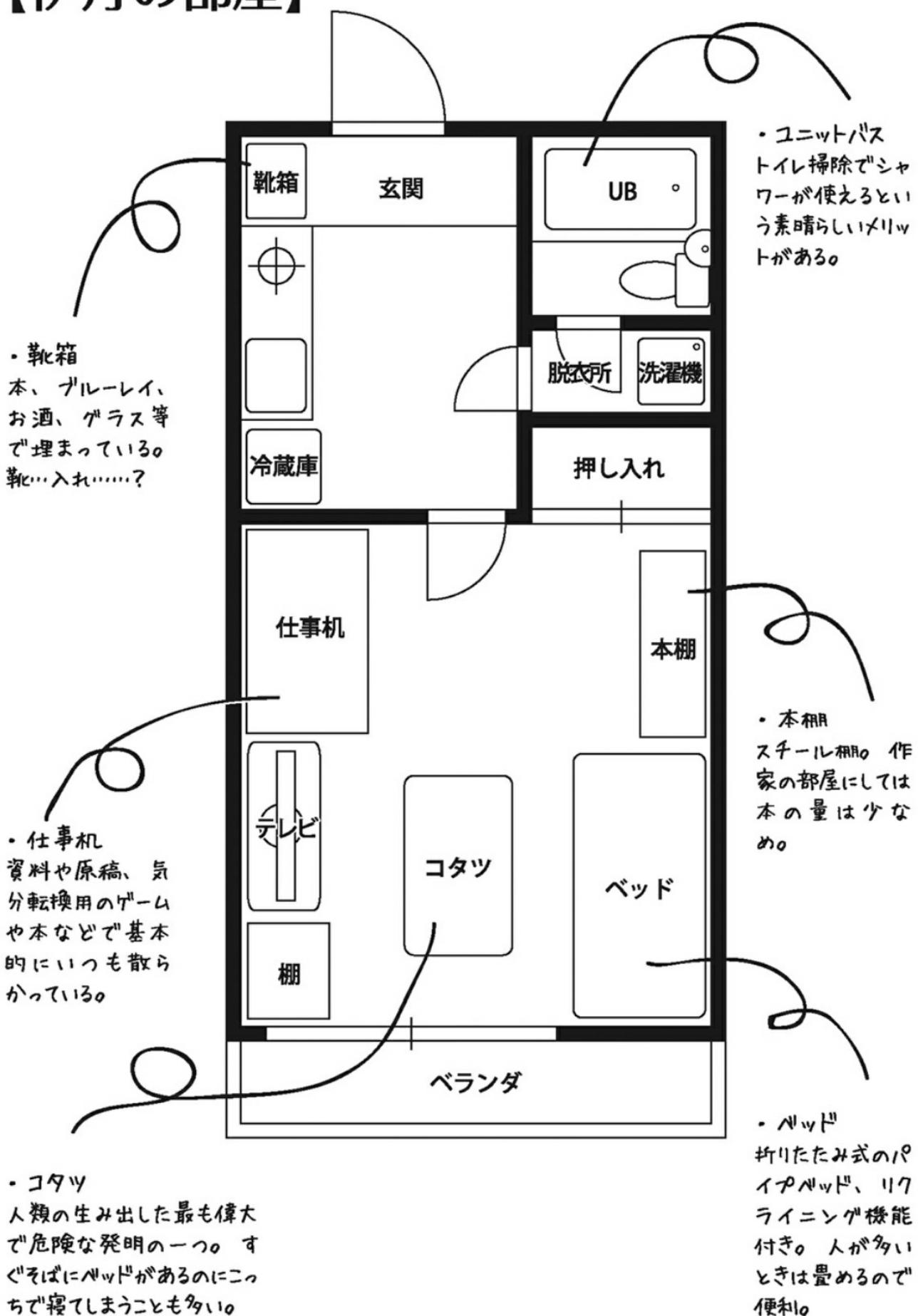
"I, I can already do so."

"Can you? You need 3 meals a day, and you cannot only eat cup noodles. You will have to cook for yourself and eat the sufficient number of vegetables. You will have to clean the room, wash dishes, separate the waste according to its type.....p-perverted books and games will have to be organized too."

"I, I can do it...."

"You can't."

【伊月の部屋】



Chihiro denied it right away.

“Onii-san, you washed your sweater with your other clothes again, right? You have to select the right type of clothing, put the right amount of detergent, select the right course, and press the right buttons.”

Itsuki put on a stiff expression as he was seen through.

“Eh, co, course....? Ugu....bu, but there’s a problem Chihiro!”

“Eh?”

“There’s no detergent! It would be too much trouble to go out and buy it, so there’s none left at all!”

“Why do you look so self-confident.... But anyway, the detergent was always in the shelf under the wash stand.”

“.....Is that so?”

“Jeez....” Chihiro sighed as his expression turned into one of slight amazement.

For some reason Chihiro seemed slightly cheerful as he muttered, “.....As I thought you can’t do anything without me here”

Chapter 2

Geniusly Perverted

The apartment of Hashima Itsuki was on the 2nd floor of a 3-storied apartment building. Built 10 years ago, it featured reinforced concrete construction, a 1K plan, wooden flooring, indoor laundry machine, and combined bath and toilet.

Inside the room was Itsuki's working desk, a collapsible bed, a TV, a largish kotatsu, and a multipurpose shelf of steel construction.

Inside the shelf, books, CDs, games, DVDs, Portables, and figures were all neatly lined up.

With so many things crammed into one room, one could not ignore the packed feeling. Wasn't this to be expected for a single guy who lived alone, though? Of course, the organizing was all done by Chihiro.

From this room, Itsuki's publishing office was only a mere 5 minute walk away, and the closest station was only 10 minutes away by foot. It really was a convenient place to live, and was highly valued by other authors as well.

When Itsuki moved in, the first thing he did was custom order a huge kotatsu, but when the actual thing arrived, he had thought "This is going to very troublesome...." and deeply regretted ordering it. As it turned out, visitors took a liking to it and it became sort of a visitor's table.

With no expression and sitting quietly, Kani Nayuta was there, reading Itsuki's light novel.

She was 18 years old as of that year.

With silver hair complimenting a pair of blue pupils, she looked as if she was a

beautiful elf from a perfect world.

She had a slim body and a smaller build, while possessing breasts that were on the larger side for her size.

Kani Nayuta was her pen name, and even Itsuki didn't know her real name.

She debuted one year ago, in the same contest Itsuki had won, so she had become more or less his junior.

Because her debut work "The Silver Landscape" suddenly erupted in popularity, she continued work on her "Landscape" series. Each volume had achieved a greater rating than the last, and her sales steadily climbed.

Though she had only published 4 of the volumes, her cumulative sales had already effortlessly exceeded Itsuki's and she had become a huge hit.

A junior overtaking a senior so quickly was not a rare occurrence in the world of light novels.

妹

Itsuki had first met Nayuta a bit before her debut—at the award party of the Newcomer's competition.

Itsuki was chatting with fellow authors, when Nayuta (17 at the time), who was with one of the guides at the party, came up to him. With a cute face and slightly teary red eyes, she suddenly said,

" — I'm in love"

Thinking that she was in love with Itsuki, everyone in the room did a double take.

She then continued, "— with Hashima-sensei's works."

““Don’t flip the sentence around!””

Even as everyone retorted, Nayuta didn’t falter one bit.

The puzzled Itsuki looked on at the girl’s face as her pure white skin gradually turned into a brilliant blue.

“Ogeeeeeee?!”

Reverse.

Being puked on by a girl he just met was a first for Itsuki. Or rather, being puked on by anyone he just met was a first.

The aspiring authors had left the scene in a hurry after that.

2 days later, Nayuta, along with the head editor, cleaning costs, and a box of cakes, had come to apologize to Itsuki. He quickly accepted.

Being in love with my works, isn’t it a common occurrence? As a senior, I must look out for my juniors. Writing endorsements of books, and if inclined, I might even personally teach the ups and downs of writing a novel fuhahahahaha!!

Itsuki had arrogantly thought along that line at that time. However...

妹

“Senpai, I’m hungry.”

Nayuta spoke up with an indifferent voice at Itsuki, who was working on his laptop.

The clock read 7 o’clock in the evening.

“nnn—— I guess it is around time to eat. Is there anything in particular that you want?”

"Senpai's p*nis will do."

"Come to think of it, there's still some chili shrimp and fried rice from yesterday. It's decided."

".....If you're going to ignore me, please don't bother asking me in the first place"

The sullen Nayuta made a sidelong glance as Itsuki took out food stored in plastic containers from the fridge and started the microwave.

Itsuki placed 2 servings on the kotatsu and the two began to dine.

Nayuta, actively blowing on the hot fried rice to cool it down and chewing with her small mouth, somehow reminded Itsuki of a kitten.

"fuu fuuu.....coming into senpai's room, eating delicious handmade meals on the kotatsu.....please marry me."



"Shut it Kani. Also, I didn't make this. Don't you live in your parent's house in the first place? You have a buffet of handmade meals."

"My mom is out of the house a lot recently, so she hasn't made many of them."

"fuun, then start learning how to make your own food."

Nayuta stared at the arrogant Itsuki with scornful eyes.

".....Isn't senpai completely hopeless in home-economics as well?"

".....ugh"

Despite the fact that he always relied on his brother to take care of stuff, Itsuki did have a will to be able to make his own meals. At the end of the day though, it was still only a will.

"A-as for me, if I had a little sister like Kobato from 'Haganai' or Komachi from 'Oregairu', I would do all I can to learn how to cook for their sake!"

"I see you haven't changed at all from your die-hard siscon attitude. If that's the case, what if you end up with one like Kirino-chan from 'Oreimo'?"^[3]

"Of Course, I would still want to present to her lots and lots of handmade cooking, but instead of showing appreciation and happily accepting it, she would say 'Haa? You can't even make a decent dish, you really are useless.', but it's exactly the thing I would want to hear anyways so there would be no need to learn."

Nayuta stared on with scornful eyes at Itsuki, who answered smoothly without any hesitation.

".....Must be an illness."

"Catching an illness from my little sister is my long-cherished ambition!Anyways, no matter how you look at it, the fault that I can't cook nor do any housework can be traced to the absence of a little sister. If I had a little sister everything would be perfect in this world, just why do I lack one..."

“.....If that’s the case, you don’t have much choice other than to tell your parents to do their best.”

Being confronted with the reality of her advice, Itsuki’s talkativeness took a u-turn and awkwardly mumbled,

“.....One that’s that young....it’s kind of.....That won’t do.”

Itsuki’s father and Chihiro’s mother had been married for 3 years.

Their relationship was doing as well as ever. His mother was quite young, in her 30s, so the birth of a younger brother or sister was not a far-fetched idea.

But if such an event really occurred, Itsuki wouldn’t know how to react.

“What a troublesome person.”

Nayuta let out a gentle smile with a slight hint of astonishment mixed in.

“Come to think of it, how are the manuscripts of your new series coming along? The main heroine isn’t the little sister this time.”

Itsuki had allowed Nayuta to read the first volume of ‘The Scarlet Jäger (Name subjected to change)’ previously.

Because she had reacted very positively, Itsuki requested her to ‘Please definitely read the continuation of my work’, however—

“Fuun.....I abandoned that series.”

As Itsuki showed no signs of joking around, Nayuta’s expression turned into one of bewilderment.

“Abandoned.....? Why is that?”

“Even though I completed the whole manuscript for vol. 2, that shitty editor demanded I rewrite it and wouldn’t have it any other way. If I had to follow that fellow’s instructions word for word it’s better to just abandon the whole thing.”

“.....Even though it was so interesting, what a shame.”

Itsuki felt pain in his chest as he looked on towards a dejected-looking Nayuta.

“But on the bright side, other than your editor, I was the only one who got to

read your manuscript right? I feel very special."

"Actually, I also gave it to Miyako and Haruto." Said persons were both acquaintances of Itsuki and Nayuta.

".....There are others as well, the manuscript turned out to be an inconceivable bitch."

Nayuta peevishly pouted as she began to dine on the fried rice once again.

妹

Since Nayuta leisurely enjoyed her dinner (on purpose), by the time she was done, the last train had already left, so Nayuta was staying the night at Itsuki's apartment.

—Nayuta liked Itsuki way too much, she wanted to do all kinds of pervy things with him, it was concrete—.

While in the shower, Nayuta made full use of her eminent imagination of a successful light novel author, and visualized things that could not be said out loud and obviously could not be published. Nayuta let out a series of sighs while putting on an enchanted expression that could not be shown to others.

The time when Nayuta first came to like Itsuki was when she was 15 years old— her first year of high school.

Nayuta had become a shut-in because of bullying from school, when she stumbled upon Itsuki's debut work.

The development of the story was very unreasonable, furthermore, the writing style was also very unorganized and messy. However, this author loved his characters with all his heart, he loved the story with all his heart, and he wrote not because it was his profession, but because he loved what he was

doing. It seemed as if his energy was overflowing.

When Nayuta had found out the author was a high school student from the afterward, she was hit extremely hard.

As a result, Nayuta's response could be expressed with a single sentence, "I'm not very good at academics nor athletics, nor do I have many friends, all I do at school is daydream, I should just write novels at home—".

.....It was indeed an afterward that the Itsuki from now would never write, but the Itsuki from the time when he first debuted was considerably honest and modest.



Anyway—.

In an isolated corner of the school where no one was around, Itsuki had taught her just how wide the world was.

I have the ability to become like that too—I sincerely want to become just like that. Nayuta strongly believed in her goal as her ambition burned brightly.

Even with almost no chance of meeting him and even without the slightest knowledge of what he looked like, Nayuta fell in love with Itsuki.

Nayuta had applied for and won the same Newcomer's contest that Itsuki had won with her very first light novel and dropped out of high school, which she didn't expect to graduate from anyways.

Nayuta passed the prize money and the royalties on her works to her parents since she couldn't be bothered to take care of it herself.

Her works immediately became a huge hit and unimaginable sums of money were flowing in every month, and of course Nayuta passed her parents the responsibility of taking care of that as well.

Nayuta couldn't care less about the money, so as long as she could stand side by side with her idol Itsuki, she was happy.

However, what Itsuki really wanted for himself was—.

“....Someone who won’t settle for anything but a little sister, Senpai really is a pervert.”

Naked in the dressing room, Nayuta buried her face in Itsuki’s boxers. She thoroughly enjoyed the smell and feel of the fabric, as she breathed in deeply.

妹

From the other point of view;

Itsuki was too aware of the sound of the shower, so he could not fully concentrate on his light novel. He tried to turn the volume of the music up to its highest.

Itsuki still could not concentrate, so he accepted that fact and started to think about Nayuta's naked body.

The time when Itsuki was confessed to was when Nayuta had come to apologize.

"Ahh don't mind it, anyone would've done that if they were nervous. I'm not that shallow of a person to hold a grudge after this fuhahaha!"

At this response, Nayuta breathed a sigh of relief, then took a deep breath.

"I like you, sensei, please go out with me."

"Hyai—hya—hyo—kyopu, kyopofo—?!"

Hit so suddenly with a confession, Itsuki's act fell apart and he became shamefully flustered.

"Wha, what are you saying, Nayuta-san!?"

Nayuta's head editor seemed to have not expected this as well and had begun panicking.

Nevertheless, Nayuta continued.

"I've always had feelings for you since the time when I first read your works. When I met you at the awards ceremony, I knew for sure that these feelings were real. These were not feelings for your works nor statuses as an author either, but romantic feelings for the person named Hashima Itsuki-sensei. I love you with all my heart, please become my lover."

Those words came entirely from her heart, simply one look at her expression confirmed it.

"....Pl, please think about this a bit more..."

Itsuki somehow squeezed out a sentence in his panicked state, and Nayuta

flusteredly dragged her head editor with her as she dashed out of the room.

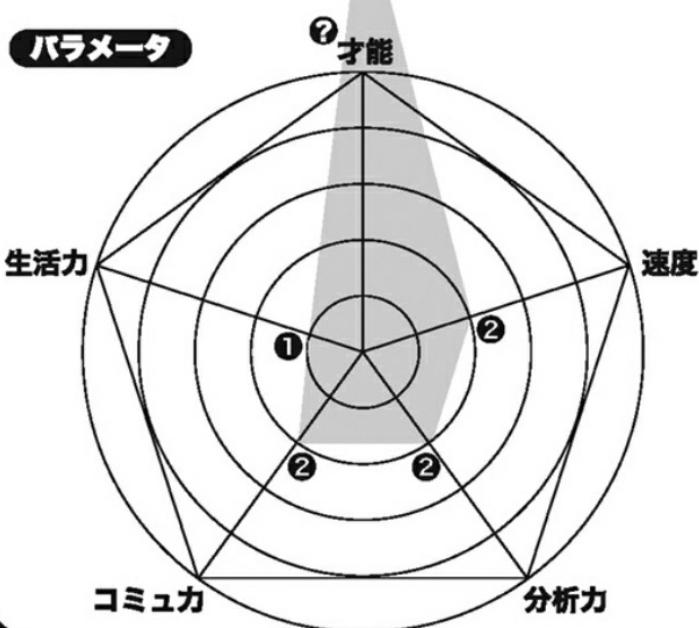
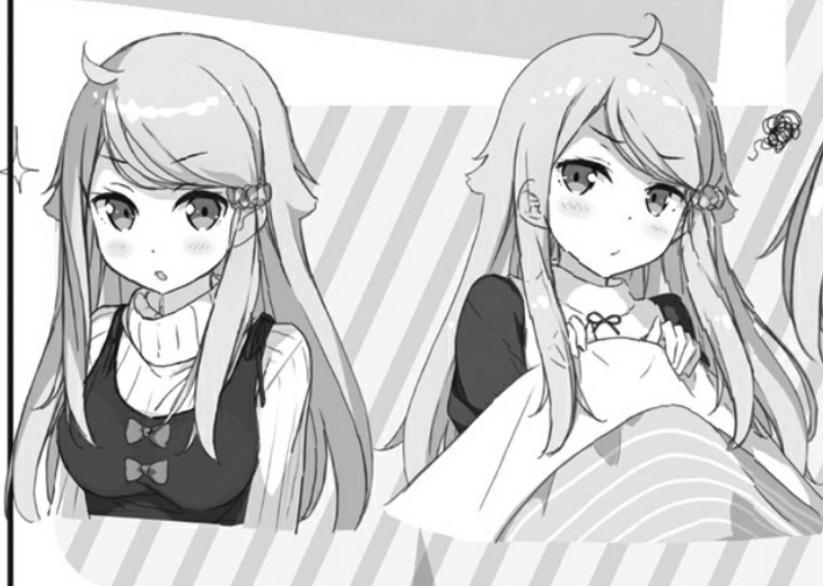
That night, Itsuki had rolled back and forth on his bed, thinking about what had happened earlier.

It was the first time a girl had confessed to him. To the Itsuki who had never dated a girl before, this event could be compared to the time when he had received the letter notifying him of winning the Newcomer's competition.

可児那由多

【かになゆた】

年齢：18歳
彗星のごとく登場した天才小説家。
行動原理は100%伊月への愛。
作品：『銀色季節』『金色季節』『灰色季節』
『白色季節』



愛も才能もヘビ一級、
残念美少女のハイエンド

Even though she wasn't his little sister, Nayuta was still breathtakingly beautiful, plus, her breasts were quite big as well. It would have been a lie if he had said he wasn't happy about her confession.

As Itsuki calmed down with time, his head suddenly filled with pink.

"Uu ~ahh ~ what should I do ~! But I had already decided my partner for marriage from the very beginning~fuhehehehe~! We don't really know each other that well in the first place anyways~, a good personality is just as important as a pretty face and a nice figure~? And if we really got together just like that, be,be-be-be-before long, won't we do p-p-p-perverted things together? As I thought, it would be better if we gradually grow closer to each other instead — ?"

As Itsuki aimlessly looked around his room, his eyes fell on the paper bag on top of the kotatsu. Nayuta had placed it there earlier.

Placed inside were the apology cake Nayuta had brought, along with a single book.

The title was the 'Silver Landscape'—scheduled for nationwide release in a week's time, it was Nayuta's debut work.

—Itsuki didn't particularly like the cover drawing, the title seemed plain to him as well, and he saw no hints of the heroine being a little sister so he couldn't really get hyped about the book. But, perhaps if he read her book he could understand Nayuta better~.

Itsuki half-heartedly flipped open the book—、

".....T, The quality.....it's different...." The shocked Itsuki, who had read from cover to cover without a single pause, quivered as he muttered.

Itsuki responded to Nayuta's confession 3 days later.

Chapter 3

There are all kinds of college girls.

Hashima Itsuki dropped out of college during his first year, so he didn't have many acquaintances. He kept in contact with only one of them.

Her name was Shirakawa Miyako.

She was 20 years old, in her 2nd year of college. She was the same age as Itsuki, and she took the same undergraduate courses as Itsuki, who was a fellow classmate....or more accurately, a former fellow classmate.

Indeed, she was a city girl with a well refined character, and she was leaning towards the cute side.

Her outstanding features included soft and wavy hair which was a shade of light brown that was easy on the eyes. Though it looked like the dyed color that is quite popular these days, it actually was her natural hair color.

Because of her glamorous physical appearance, she was quite popular in middle school and high school, though she had never had a boyfriend before.

The first time Itsuki had talked to her was around 1 month after school started.

Everyone was excited about the new school year, and they formed personal circles, talked about parties, took on new part time jobs, and made new friends. A few of them had even gotten together already and were dating regularly too. However, in the midst of all this commotion, there was always a single boy who sat alone.

During breaks, he was always in the corner of the last row, typing away on his laptop with a serious expression. Occasionally he would giggle by himself,

softening his expression.

Even during lectures, he was on his computer typing away, but it was obvious to everyone his typing did not have anything to do with the current lesson. Different expressions appeared on his face once in a while, from happiness to anger to sadness. Then, after the classes of the day were finished, he went home immediately.

Miyako's friends always made side comments or jokes about how he was kind of 'gross' or 'dark,' or how he had 'no friends,' but Miyako thought a bit differently.

She felt that he was holding something tightly inside, something that was more important to him than college lectures, playing with friends, or even romance.

For reasons unbeknownst to Miyako, she could not pull herself away. Indeed, he had the 'something' that she did not sense in anybody else.

With these feelings, she made up her mind to go and inquire about what he—Hashima Itsuki, was always up to.

"Kopufo-!? I, I have no idea what you're talking about??"

Itsuki cried out, as he suspiciously tried to avoid her sudden questioning. However, Miyako did not let up and kept pressing her questions. Before long, it was obvious he was in the midst of writing a light novel.

"Light novel? Itsuki wants to be a light novel author?"

"A, about that...." Itsuki made a troubled expression and tried to prevaricate.

".....It's not that I want to be.....it's more like I already am."

Because Itsuki used his real name to sign his works, Miyako had quickly found the last copy of his book in the college cooperative association's publishing corner and had hastily bought it. To tell the truth though, she had had no idea what was going on in the story.

The next day, she had sat next to Itsuki during the lectures, and confessed frankly, "I read Itsuki-kun's light novel but I don't really get it."

".....fu, fuun-! The target audience of my light novels are not meant to be

bitches such as yourself!"

Miyako became annoyed.

Because of her appearance, she was used to jealous gossip ever since middle school, however, it was her first time being called a bitch.

"I, I am anything but a bitch! Or should I say, if that's the case, what kind of people are you targeting!? Why is it that the little sister can use her magic after you kiss her!?"

"Fuhaha! As I expected, it's hard for a bitch to understand holy mythology!"

"Would you stop calling me a bitch?? I, I've only dated once before— Anyways, t, that kind of weird story, there is not a single soul in the world who would understand!"

"How regrettable—!! What you've just read was the 2nd volume of "GeneSister of the New World", the 1st volume of that book has more than 100000 copies~!"

"Eh, no way....that...?" As Miyako let her tongue slip without thinking, Itsuki sensitively responded.

"W,what do you mean by 'that'! 100000 copies sold...that is to say that 100000 people other than you understand my work! A work that so many understand yet you don't get a single bit of it~ Even so, you don't show any shame and even loudly proclaim otherwise, you've gone beyond laughable. Oh, how I pity you! Being ashamed of one's ignorance isn't a bad thing; however, it is a sin if one refuses to face it and even outright denies it! For such a shameless bitch, it'll be fine if you just dug a hole and hide in it!!!!"

Itsuki went on and on in surging waves—

Pachin-!



She had slapped him without thinking.

"Wha.....wha....!?"

Tears fell from Miyako's face as she glared at the dumbfounded Itsuki.

"Y, You didn't have to go that far, idiot! Uuuu~"

"Ah, eh, ah, that....ummm, err, p, perhaps I did go a bit too far...recently The sh*t reviews on amazon are just as ferocious if not more than what I said before so I kind of lost control a bit...err...I'm...sorry...a, anyways, please stop crying, bitch!"

"As I said before, I'm not a bitch! Also, I'm not crying!"

"No, no matter how you look at it, you are."

"I'm not crying nor am I a bitch!"

"Eh, ah, ok...that's how it is...you're not crying nor are you a bitch."

"Exactly!!"

...And with that, the two had turned bright red and hung their heads as they finally realized every single pair of eyes in the room had been focused on them.

"....crap, this is the worst....what if they think I'm a weird guy now?"

"...There's no need to worry, they've thought that way for a long time now."

That was the first contact between the two of them, and from then on they had continued communicating.

As soon as they saw each other, it would turn into the worst meeting, but Miyako's curiosity conquered her bad impression of Itsuki.

No matter how much Itsuki tried to explain his love towards little sisters, Miyako simply didn't understand one bit. Even so, the books and games that Itsuki had lent her were all pretty interesting, and she enjoyed hearing about his work and his stories of the publishing office. She also offered advice on the fashion of the female characters in Itsuki's novels.

This is why she was shocked when Itsuki suddenly declared he was dropping out after summer vacation and the start of the 2nd term.

The message displayed on her phone which she saw while just coming out of the shower.

“I’m leaving school.”

.....It really was just that.

3 measly words.

He had never discussed it with his only friend, and he ended it all with only a report of 3 measly words, it seemed quite sad and also regretful.

Of course, after she got dressed, she did not waste a moment and headed straight to grab the phone and question Itsuki.

“Fuhahaha! It’s to be expected that you wouldn’t realize that the likes of college is nothing but a waste of time for an aspiring author ranked top 10 in Original Content!” Itsuki declared in his usual arrogant tone.

At heart, Itsuki really didn’t care about college.

That was probably the reason why he had only used 3 words to tell the news.

In Miyako, who would’ve taken matters such as this much more seriously, feelings of envy and admiration towards Itsuki, who readily decided without consulting anyone, made their way to the surface.

And then, the words “a waste of time” pierced her chest like a needle.

As tears fell steadily from her eyes for reasons unbeknownst to her, she had cheered him on by saying “Please do your utmost best without faltering!” with a pained voice and promptly hung up.

At the time, Miyako was convinced to stay by Itsuki’s side.

And perfectly in line with that promise, Miyako regularly visited Itsuki’s apartment after he dropped out.

Because his apartment was only 5 minutes from the University by foot, it was not a weird occurrence for Miyako to kill time at his place....or that’s how it was supposed to be.

And so, Miyako came to visit that day as always.

A few moments after ringing the bell, Miyako could hear the door being

unlocked.

Miyako hurriedly bursted out the reason for her visit, which she had thought of beforehand.

“I, Itsuki-, I had a bit of free time but the library was a bit too crowded, so I thought I’d drop by here to study for my exams—”

The one who stepped forward after opening the door was not Itsuki, but a pretty silver haired girl in her underwear.

“Na.....Na, Nayu....!?”

“Ah, good morning, Mya-san. If you’re looking for senpai, he is still asleep. ... did keep at it until morning after all.” Nayuta had casually said with a sleepy expression towards Miyako, who had instantly turned red and was lost for words.

“Na, ya...!? I, is that....i, if so, sorry for intruding....!”

“Ah, please wait a moment, Mya-san, if you’re leaving then allow me to accompany you.”

Nayuta called out and stopped Miyako, who was in a hurry to leave.

妹

After getting dressed, Nayuta joined Miyako and the two of them walked towards the station.

Even though it was winter, Miyako audaciously wore a revealing miniskirt. In stark contrast, Nayuta was wearing a full suit of armour, with the long coat and mufflers leaving no holes for the winter air to exploit.

Looking at the round and fluffy Nayuta, Miyako couldn’t help being reminded

of her cat.

Since almost right after they first met, Nayuta had been emotionally attached to Miyako.

Miyako as well, thought that Nayuta...no, even though she had changed quite a lot, Miyako still thought of her as a good kid.

"Actually, I have something to discuss with Miyako."

"Discuss...?"

Nayuta continued with a heavy expression. "Indeed, recently, senpai hasn't done any perverted things."

"Ha-!?" Miyako unintendedly raised her voice.

"S,so it's true that you two already share such relationship...? Eh...? But, haven't done it recently, just now you said until morning...you guys had..."

"Even after I went to sleep, it seems like he kept working on his manuscript until morning."

"That's too misleading! Eh? B, but, you said 'recently'... As I thought, the relationship between you guys..."

"From the day that we've met until now, senpai has not done a single indecent act towards me."

"So I say that it's misleading! You're doing this on purpose aren't you!?"

"Fufufu, this is the so-called descriptive trick."

"Don't use such a meaningless technique!"

Miyako rebuked Nayuta, but in actuality she felt relieved at heart.

".....But, why were you in your underwear just now?"

"I wanted to cuddle naked with senpai, but the bell sounded at that moment and that was the only clothing I could put on in a short time."

"That was close!"

Paying no mind to Miyako's surprise, Nayuta continued as a matter of fact. "See, isn't Mya-san a bitch? Aren't you thinking about how to get senpai to

desire me?"

"Desire...isn't that yourself.....Anyhow, I'm not a bitch!"

"Is that so? I've been hearing chatter everywhere about how college girls are all p*nis eaters."

"Both you and Itsuki...even narrow views have a limit....Ah, well, there are those who play around a bit too much among my circle of friends as well but..."

"So Mya-san is a virgin?"

To the Nayuta who cocked her head in puzzlement, Miyako said "O, of course not! It's only natural for anyone my age to have some experience already!"

Though she had never even been on a date before, she flusteredly tried to put on air.

"Ha—, as expected, Mya-san is a mature woman."

As Nayuta looked on with admirable eyes, Miyako could feel cold sweat surfacing.

"I also want to hurry up and do pervy things with Senpai to be like Mya-san."

"So I say that's a bit...anyways, that way to saying things suggest that Itsuki and I.....doesn't it sound like 'that'? Those kinds of things are impossible!" Miyako's face turned bright red.

"....Jeez, just what do you see in that hopeless perverted siscon...."

"Everything. I like everything about senpai."

Faced with such a sudden and definitive response, Miyako could not respond with even a single squeak.

Miyako was jealous of Nayuta's ability to speak out so openly about who she liked without shame.

That is why she unconsciously said, "...Ahh, I see.... Well, do your best, I'm supporting you."

Then, Nayuta beamed a smile resembling those of a fairy.

"Thank you so much, Mya-san. Because I've never had a single friend, I'm very

happy that you were willing to be my friend.”

“I, is that so....well, I think it’s good that I became your friend as well...”

Though those words were not lies, Miyako couldn’t help but feel slightly guilty.

妹

Miyako and Nayuta had first met around half a year earlier.

It was during a usual visit to Itsuki’s apartment by Miyako, where she first bumped into Nayuta.

Nayuta had heard about her from Itsuki, who said she was merely a friend from college who occasionally read his manuscripts, but she didn’t think her appearance would be like that of a stereotypical normie^[4] — “Because it’s senpai’s friend after all!” — At first, Nayuta didn’t even bother to hide her hostilities.

Since Itsuki fell asleep shortly after they arrived, the two of them were left together.

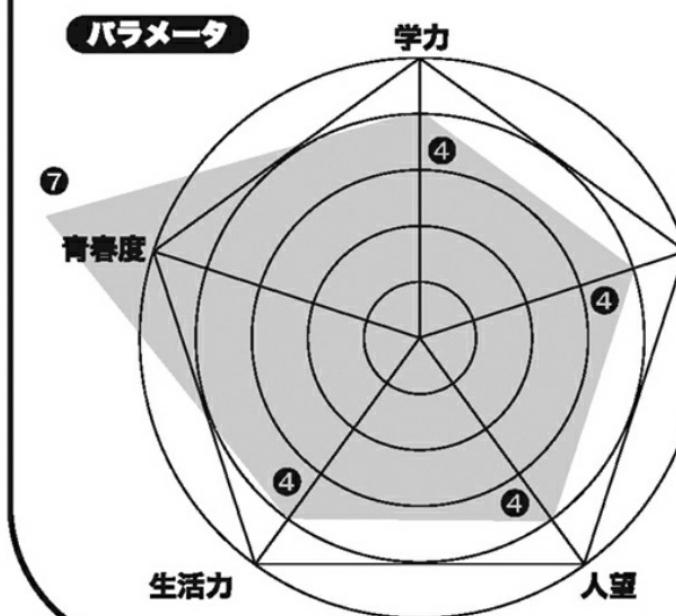
It was then that Nayuta went straight to the point. “Shirakawa-san, do you like Itsuki?”

Not expecting such a sudden question, Miyako instinctively tried to gloss over the answer.

“I, it’s not like that! We are merely friends!”

白川京

年齢：20歳
伊月の大学時代の同級生。
面倒見のいい姉御肌だがちょっと流され
やすいところがある。



恋に迷い友情に迷い 夢に迷う青春三冠王

Nayuta let out a sigh of relief, and then gazed towards Miyako without any more signs of hostility.

"By the way, I like senpai. He is my everything." Nayuta declared on top of previous clues to warn Miyako about extending towards Itsuki.

Miyako inquired 'Where do you see good in that idiot siscon anyways?', so Nayuta started to tell her about how Itsuki's light novels saved and transformed her.

~ About how she suffered from severe bullying in middle school.

~ About how, in the depth of her despair, she discovered a ray of hope in the descriptive language of an award-winning novel.

Nayuta used this opportunity to describe just how much her savior meant to her.

She was quite distressed when a potential rival came into the scene.

In the end, Miyako was fuming mad.

Her face contorted in anger as large tears fell from her eyes, pitying Nayuta and spouted curses towards Nayuta's old peers.

"Ahhh jeez! Why wasn't I there back then! I would've socked every single one of them!"

Nayuta had met the unexpected response with slight surprise, and subconsciously let out a grin.

Ahh, she is sincerely mad for my sake, sincerely crying for me. She's a good person. I like her.

This was how Nayuta readily accepted Miyako.

It had been half a year since then.

Nayuta has yet to discover Miyako's true feelings for Itsuki.

Chapter 4

Now there is a boy friend too

“Sup, the handsome guy’s here.”

It was evening. While Itsuki remained holed up in his room, working, the bell rang, followed by a shameless line from outside.

Itsuki scowled as he opened the door.

That line itself was terrible, but the person standing there was really a handsome guy, as declared.

He was in his early 20s.

He had narrow eyes, an impressionable handsome face, and wears thin framed glasses; his hair was dyed bright brown, short and unkempt.

He was so skinny, but despite this, he did not look weak at all. His legs were half as long as his body.

He had a kind smile on his face, and overall, was a youth giving off a vibrant flair.

If a handsome guy calls himself handsome, I wouldn’t know how to react, so stop with that, Itsuki thought. But if a handsome guy’s going to act humble and say ‘I’m not some handsome guy~’, it’ll be really infuriating, so—

“—So the conclusion’s that all handsome guys should die.”

“What kind of conclusion is that?”

The handsome guy showed a wry smile after being told to die, but that wry smile gave a refreshing impression for some reason.

Itsuki did not know his actual name, but the pen name was Fuwa Haruto.

Like Itsuki, he was a novelist working under the same label, and debuted in the same newcomer award along with the former. They were authors from the same batch.

“Yo, Itsuki. Doing well recently?”

“Humph. Sort of.”

“Washed your p*nis properly?”

“Do-don’t say such things so openly out there!”

Itsuki panicked, his face reddened, and Haruto laughed,

“Relax. Your 4 neighbors to your left and right side, top and bottom are all college students who should be at school now.”

“...How is it that you know about the people living in the apartments here more than I do...?”

Itsuki groaned with his eyes half opened, “Anyway, come in.” and invited Haruto into his room.

“Please excuse me. Ah, here’s a present. I’ll put it in the fridge then.”

“Oh.”

Haruto opened the fridge as though he was in his own kitchen, placed the tote bag filled with numerous bottles of foreign beer into it, and took out one bottle of the Gouden Carolus (Belgium Beer) Tripel and Christmas^[5] each.

Itsuki’s room was for his personal use, but the fridge was family size. 20% of the space was used for the food Chihiro prepared, while 60% were beer bottles and cans.

The remaining 20% were PET bottles filled with water and tea, raw ham, cheese, sausages, chocolate, dried fruits, tsumami^[6], snacks^[7] isotonic drinks and so on.

The alcohol in the fridge were basically all foreign, half of them Belgium beer, and there was also beer from other countries, like Germany, Holland, America and England. The only Japanese beer were a few cans of Yona Yona Ale. Most of the beer and tsumami were brought over by Haruto.

Itsuki's room was close to the publisher, so whenever Haruto paid a visit to the publisher, he could pop by on the way here.

"I'll borrow a plate here."

Without waiting for Itsuki's reply, haruto went to take a large plate from the kitchen, opened the packaged raw ham he brought along with the beer, arranged it along the circumference of the plate, placed the cheese and dried fruit prettily on the plate, and served it onto the kotatsu.^[8]

He then took out two grail-shaped beer glasses^[9] that were meant for Gouden Carolus from the cupboard, washed them briefly, and put them along with the two bottles of beers and the opener onto the table.

"Kept you waiting!"

He finished his preparations as swiftly as Chihiro, and entered the kotatsu.

"Oh." In response to Haruto, Itsuki nodded in an exaggerated manner.

On a side note, while the guest Haruto was busy serving beer and tsumami, the owner of the room, Itsuki, remained at the kotatsu the entire time, reading manga.

"Which one?"

Haruto took the two bottles, asking, "This one." Itsuki pointed to the Christmas version.

Haruto opened the bottle, and poured into the glass.

The rich brown color frothing with bubbles filled the glasses, and the room was immediately filled with the scent of herbs and spice.

"Anyway, good job!"

"Oh."

They gave a toast, knocking the glasses lightly, and Itsuki was anxious to have a quick sip of beer, only to be suddenly stopped bu Haruto.

"Ah, wait."

"?"

"Itsuki, make a peace sign on the plate."

"...Like this?"

Confused as he was, Itsuki obedient put down the glass, put his hand on the somewhat glamorous looking plate filled with tsumami, and did a scissors sign.

Haruto then reached his left hand out, put it beside Itsuki's hand, and did a peace sign too, taking a photo on the smartphone using his right hand.

"Right, okay. Erm, 'I'm having a meal with my batchmate Hashima Itsuki-kun's house ^^, we've been meeting three times a week recently, time to get married'...uploaded."

"...What are you uploading?"

"Hm? I'm declaring on Twitter that I have gay tendencies."

In response to that question, Haruto answered as he tapped at his smartphone.

"...?"

Hearing that, Itsuki still had no clue, and Haruto continued,

"Haven't I been showing up out there, recently?"

"Yeah."

Fuwa Haruto's debut work 'Keikai no Chevalier' series was no match for Kani Nayuta's 'Silver Lanscape', but it was one of the top selling hit series under the label, and was to become an anime on April this year.

Because of the anime, Haruto began to hold autograph sessions, interviews from anime magazines, internet news websites, and video sites. Due to his looks, he was starting to be recognized as the 'handsome guy' author.

Haruto's reader demographic was focused on young men, and typically, most of the readers would not have much interest in the author. However, some of them were spiteful at the sight of a handsome guy, and some were really worried that the author would be too handsome he would eat up the voice actresses in the anime.

"That's why I need to act like I got some gay tendencies. I just need everyone

to think that I prefer to hang out with guys rather than flirt with girls, and I won't have to worry about being hated by the fans of those voice actresses. Also, I'll be able to attract the older sister type fans who have such *interests*, which makes it killing two birds with one stone."

"...You have it rough, huh."

While Itsuki looked dumbfounded and somewhat sympathetic, he suddenly realized something.

"Huh? If I'm going to get involved in showing gay tendencies, then what about me...!"

"Hm? Come out of the closet with me."

"Do-don't kid me now! Why do I have to be mistaken by everyone for a gay just for the sake of protecting you!"

"Eh? What's the problem with that? Maybe you'll open up to a new fan group."

"Like hell I need it! I won't feel happy about selling books through an author's personality and characteristics!"

"...!"

For a moment, Haruto showed a serious look, but he then gave a bitter smile, saying, "You're really serious in some weird way..." And then,

"But even if the world thinks of you as gay, you don't really care anyway, right?"

"You got to be kidding! If my work's adapted into the anime, and there's rumors out there of me being gay when I'm going to get married to the ultimate voice actress voicing the ultimate little sister that's the main heroine, that's going to be troublesome, right!?"

"Eh, you want to marry a voice actress, Isuki?"

"Fuhahaha, you idiot! I've no intention of marrying at all. The important thing is that the image of me going 'I'm the golden standard to the voice actresses' looks cool and great fuhahahaha!"

“...Are you getting tired?”

“...Ah, um...I’ve been getting writer’s block recently...”

Haruto asked, giving a serious look, and Itsuki nodded with a ω look.

“...Really? Better not drink for today then.”

“No, maybe I’ll get some inspiration after I get drunk, so I’m drinking!”

Saying that, Itsuki gulped down the beer

The splendorous fragrance mixed with many herbs and spices entered filled the nostrils, and the rich sweet taste lingered in the mouth, followed by a comforting, complex bitterness.

The alcohol content of Gouden Carolus Christmas beer is 10.5, more than twice of an ordinary beer in Japan, but it did not feel as such, and so he could not stop drinking.

“Ah...this is great.”

Itsuki’s face was flushed red, his eyes blurred as he exhaled.

“Don’t drink at such a high pace there.”

Haruto gave a bitter smile, and took a little sip, letting the beer roll on his tongue as he tasted it.

“You said you reached a block, so I guess it’s that? Jäger, the first work which you didn’t use an imouto heroine, Hashima.”

“...No, I scratched that.”

Itsuki answered a little apologetically.

Haruto was often checking the recent novels and anime, and was very well-informed on the recent trends, so when Itsuki was pondering over the ‘Bright Red Jäger (tentative name), he sought Haruto out for advice, and showed the latter the draft for the prologue.

“Scratched? Really? Why?”

Haruto was taken aback, and Itsuki finished up the contents of the glass.

“I need to have an imouto heroine in my work no matter what! That’s why I’m

thinking of starting a new project and think of an ultimate little sister nobody has thought of before!"

"...Your siscon tendencies are too ingrained."

Haruto chuckled dumbfoundedly, and ate a piece of dried fruit to go with the beer.

"...I have a real little sister, and to be honest, a little sister isn't as nice as you think, you know? No matter what I do, I'll get nitpicked here and there, and she'll find fault with me, saying that my novels are boring and disgusting, that after watching my interviews, she just feels annoyed, feel like puking and such, it's really depressing."

"You idiot! Don't compare that filthy thing taking on the appearance of a little sister to my little sister."

"Fi-filthy thing...? My little sister isn't that bad, alright!? She's actually quite cute in the past and when I fell sick from a cold just a while back, she ran off to buy jelly for me—anyway, you don't have a little sister!"

"No I do!"

"Eh!?"

"She's in my heart!"

"O-oh...I see..."

Haruto showed a look of sympathy.

"...But to be honest...recently, your novels, even though I don't have that cute little sister element ...they're getting a little out there, you know? I'm seeing reviews on the internet, like 'it's getting harder to put myself in the protagonist's shoes'."

"Why are you looking at reviews of my books on the internet...!?"

"Don't mind. It's my interest to read reader reviews on other novels."

"Hmph..."

Itsuki snorted in annoyance, poured some beer into his empty glass, and downed it all,

"...I know that there's been a lot of such noise from the readers recently. I thought they were just a bunch of guys who used the Amazon reviews as their own diary entries, or just some anons trolling away, only daring to post such things on imageboards, but the editor told me that in the questionnaire for the middle and high school students, the only one that actually matters, such sentiments are becoming more common..."

Itsuki continued to down the beer dejectedly,

"But!"

Don! He slammed the kotatsu table,

"I'm never going to lose to those commoners! If I'm to compromise because I'm scared of being criticized that I'm too far from reality, I'm never going to write out the ultimate little sister! I might as well go all the way and create a groundbreaking originality for an absolute Godly Little sister everyone in the world will kneel to, and dice up those foolish commoners' souls!"

Itsuki boasted with enthusiasm, and drank some beer.

After that, Itsuki continued to passionately talk about little sisters, the world and grumble at the editor, while Haruto merely responded with things like 'oh~', 'yeah yeah'. Soon after, Itsuki was completely drunk, and no matter what Haruto said to him, all he could do was answer 'Nyanpasu'^[10].

"Really...I told you not to go at such a high pace..."

"Nyanpasu~"

Itsuki's consciousness was almost gone as his eyes remained closed, raising a hand, giving off a comfortable, feeble voice.

"...Your name is?"

"Nyanpasu!"

"...And where do you stay?"

"Nyanpasu!"

"Nyanpasuu~"

"Nyan...pasu...?"

Itsuki finally collapsed backwards, facing up, and went to sleep.
Haruto gave a bitter grin as he watched that blissful sleeping face,
“...I guess Nayu-chan will be delighted if I take a photo of this and send this to her.”

Haruto said this as he took a photo of Itsuki’s sleeping face, but he did not send it to Nayuta, but kept it in his smartphone instead.

“Fnya...nyan...pasu...”

While Itsuki continued with his sleeptalk, Haruto paid no heed as he poured beer for himself.



"Well, do your best then...while you geniuses remain stuck on such stupid things, I'm going to move a move forward..."

The handsome, refreshed smile remained on Haruto's face, but deep within his eyes, something seemed to be burning.

妹

After approximately two hours of drinking a few bottles of beer and finishing the tsumami, Haruto washed the dishes and bottles, moved Itsuki, so deep in sleep from the kotatsu to his bed, and left the room.

The chilly winds immediately robbed the heat from the body heated up by the alcohol, and Haruto shivered.

—For Fuwa Haruto, Hashima Itsuki was not simply a friend to ask out for drinking, but also an ally working together in him in the same industry, under the same label, a little brother that would need lots of care, and at the same time, an 'enemy' he aimed to defeat.

Both Haruto and Itsuki were awarded 'prized work' in the same rookie awards, but the reviews they received were completely different.

Till this point, Haruto could not forget the appraisal of their works.

—it's crude, there is a lot of problems with the content, and to be honest, there's doubt as to whether this work can be pushed out to the market. However, the work is filled with an indescribable charm. This certainly is a work only he can write, and as for what kind of author this person will develop into, I'm really interested in it.

—This one has in-depth research on the recent trends, and a model student's level of work. The quality is sufficient enough for publishing immediately, and they'll probably sell. (Digs nose)

There was no need to mention whose work was whose.

At the moment the reviews were made, Haruto angrily thought of beating up that reviewer, but when he actually read Itsuki's work after it was published, "I lost." he had the thought.

Haruto's novel had an overwhelming advantage in sales volume, so much that it was able to be adapted into an anime, but he did not feel that he won.

The term defeat was as such—nothing to do with the reviews from others on sales volume, fame, social rating and sorts.

Further enhancing the sense of defeat in Haruto was when he saw Kani Nayuta read Itsuki's work a year ago, and aimed to be an author—how he saw the living example of Itsuki's work changing a person's life.

To roughly classify authors, they could be grouped as the 'artist' type who would use their own senses as weapons, and the 'technician' who would analyze market trends and write accordingly.

Of course, such classifications could not be used universally on all authors, and most of them had both of such natures, like 'an artist with some technical flair', or 'mostly classified as a technician' and such, but Itsuki and Nayuta were mostly the former type, while Haruto was the latter.

Artists, and technicians; for an author, there was nothing to decide which type was superior. Only by producing actual results would there not be a need to feel so inferior.

To be honest, the artist type would be easily affected emotionally, and the fluctuation in work quality and creativity speed would be great, with the worst-case scenario being that they couldn't write at all. In contrast, the technician type that is able to write at a steady, solid pace of stable quality would be more favored by the publishers.

Haruto himself understood this logic well, but...

“...If I really have to choose, I rather be a genius...”

His muttering vanished into the night, never reaching anyone's ears.

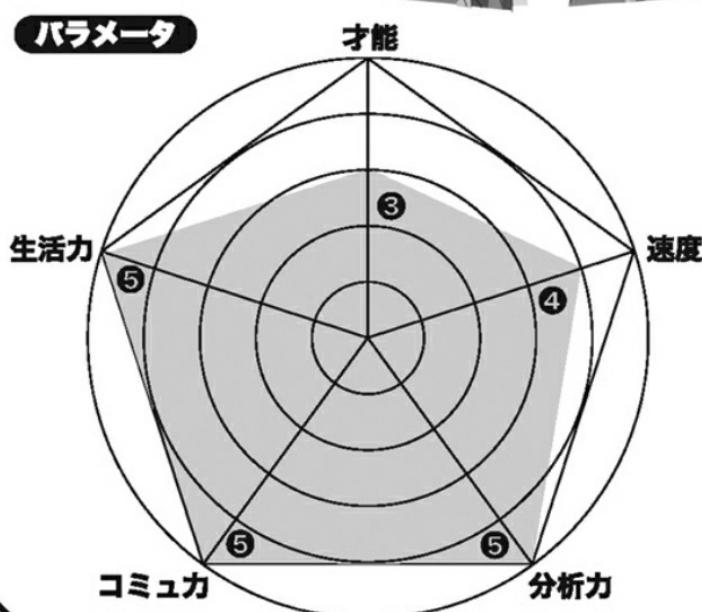
不破春斗

【ふわ・はると】

年齢：22歳
伊月の同期の作家。流行に敏感でセルフプロデュース能力に長ける。作品：『絶界の聖霊騎士』シリーズ（～12巻）



パラメータ



才能以外の全てを兼ね備えたイケメン作家

Chapter 5

Main Theme

Fuwa Haruto has a little sister of 7 years difference.

Like her older brother, she was a beautiful girl of outstanding appearance and figure, but while Haruto was always so kind in the eyes of outsiders, she was cold and aloof, berating several male students who summoned their courage to confess to her, traumatizing them.

Ever since young, she looked up to Haruto, always cling onto him, saying onii-chan, onii-chan; now, whenever they met outside, she would not bother to look at him in the eyes.

“You’re late, Onii^[11]!”

Once Haruto returned home, his little sister began grumbling, “Didn’t you promise you’ll do my homework for me today!? What will you do when you get me scolded at school!”

Haruto gave an impatient look, and sighed, showing a crude attitude he definitely would not show any outsider, saying, “Shut up. Can’t blame me for having a longer meeting.”

“You’re lying! You went drinking at a friend’s place again, didn’t you! I saw it on Twitter!”

“! St-stop looking at my Twitter here, you idiot.”

Haruto clicked his tongue.

That little sister mention was most probably referring to the homo context he posted at Itsuki’s house, and certainly, it was really embarrassing that this Tweet was seen by a family member.

“...Alright, it’s kind of late now. Hurry up and finish your homework before you sleep.”

Haruto tried to change the topic, entered his little sister’s room, and began to assist with homework.

“Goodness, homework’s meant to be done by yourself, you idiot.”

“I’m not an idiot! If I show my real ability, I’ll be able to finish it at one go, but it’s a waste for me to use it at such a moment, so I got no choice but to have you help me out! Be grateful that I’m being magnanimous here, you idiot!”

“What’s with that...?”

Haruto was dumbfounded by that unreasonable line, and solved each math question one after another.

That little sister’s words might be real when she said she could finish it if she really got down to it; besides, she’s amongst the top of her class, and Haruto thought, just get serious already.

In a mere few minutes, they were done with all the questions, “Right, I’m going to make a move now.”

Haruto was about to return to his room, but Little sister stopped him, “Wa-wait a sec! There’s pudding in the fridge. I’ll share some of it with you as reward.”

“Nope, don’t want it. I’m going to take a bath, and then sleep.”

“I want to eat! Anyway, wait here like a proper adult!”

The little sister blushed as she hurried out of the room, “You’ll get fat eating pudding at night...” while Haruto grumbled.

Soon after, little sister returned, and Haruto had no choice but to eat pudding with her.

“Anyway, onii.”

‘Hm?’

“Onii, your novels just feel boring no matter how many times I read it. I read your latest book about 100 times already, and I still don’t know how is it

interesting in any way.”

“I see.”

Haruto had heard of similar words so often that he was sick of it, so he paid no heed to that. Seeing that, his little sister puffed her cheeks unhappily.

“The most important thing is that the heroine has no charm at all. Isn’t there the trend of some fated heartfelt encounter or something...I think making someone who’s been all the while be the main heroine would bring out more emotion from the readers.”

“...People around you, huh...like for example, childhood friends? That’s not really considered current trends.”

“Huh? Childhood friends are basically just outsiders already. Are you stupid?”

“So what else are there. Say it.”

“Like I know, you stupid onii! Also, I saw your interview with the anime magazine. It’s really disgusting.”

“H-how’s that disgusting!?”

Haruto already read the interview report, and there was nothing to raise issues about. The photo shoot also seemed decent, but it would feel that he was bragging if he said that.

“You’re trying too hard to act cool. Look, what’s with that face? Did you ask the photographer to take it from that angle? You’re not an idol. You think that you’ll look cool taking it from that angle? It’s disgusting!”

“Sh-shut up!”

Haruto’s face went red, embarrassed from how he was criticized for his changes.

“I think you might as well wear a Hagedura^[12] and make weird faces. That’ll suit you better, onii.”

“Are you an idiot!? Won’t those female fans I managed to gain after so long be scared away!?”

“Aren’t your novels directed at virgins anyway? So what if you can’t attract

any female fans!?”

“Of course there is, you idiot! Even for novels directed at male readers, the key to success is whether it’ll be able to gain support from fem—ow!!”

Guh! He was beaten on the arm.

“You’re an idiot, onii! I don’t care about you anymore, you idiot! Get out now!”

“H-hey, I’m not done with the pudding—”

“I’ll eat it!”

“You’ll grow fat eating two puddings! You’re going to get fat!”

“Shut up, you idiot! Die!”

The pudding that was half finished was snatched by the little sister, and Haruto got hit on the arm, chased out of the room.

“Just be a pig already!!”

Haruto yelled at the door, and with a scowl, returned to his room.

“Ahh...I guess I should just rent a room outside after all...”

Having intended to work a little before sleeping, Haruto took out a laptop from his bag, and sighed hard.

He had been living in this house for 22 years, ever since he was born. He intended to move out and live alone when he was admitted into college and was determined to be a professional author, only to be strongly opposed by the little sister. His parents agreed with the latter, and he gave up on moving out.

—A little sister definitely isn’t a good thing.

Haruto truly felt this way.

If Itsuki was to see the interaction between Haruto and his little sister, he would definitely be yelling, “That’s a reward alrlrrrrriiggghtt!” dying with envious tears of blood (and because he’s too envious, he’ll die of despair due to

the illogical reality). Haruto, being a bonafide realist however, stubbornly thought “There’s no way my little sister can be a tsundere brocon”, and never realized this fact.

However, even if he did realize, there certainly would not be any changes.

Fuwa Haruto, living with an actual brocon of a tsundere little sister, would hope to have talent instead.

Talents, gold, standing, honor, looks, personalities, dreams, hopes, liberal, stability, friends, lover, little sister.

What everyone yearned is undoubtedly what others would have, but in the eyes of those who have them, they were worthless.

It really is a rare miracle to have something one truly desired—but tragedies and comedies happen because miracles don’t really occur.

It appears everything in this world is as such.

Chapter 6

Turtle Soup

A few days passed since the conception death of the ‘Bright Red Jäger (tentative name)’.

Hashima Itsuki continues to sleep under the kotatsu, playing his portable games and reading books from time to time.

To a bystander, such an act was merely him being lazy. However, it was an imperative part of novel creation.

At this point, Itsuki is thinking of new ideas to replace the ‘Bright Red Jäger (tentative name)’.

Ideas were not something that could be thought of by bucking up into work mode and sitting in front of a computer; it typically comes from relaxing and doing things unrelated to work. To be specific, like playing games, reading books, having a shower, taking a dump, and so on. Ideas will suddenly drop in just like that.

For an author, playing and rolling around lazily is an important topic too. It’s true. Please, believe it.

At this moment, besides Itsuki himself, Fuwa Haruto and Kani Nayuta were in the room, holed up under the kotatsu.

Haruto made a visit after leaving the editorial branch, and was on his tablet, finishing up the rest of his report. Nayuta had nothing to do but to run to Itsuki’s room and fool around, giving Haruto a “I won’t be able to spend alone time with senpai here, shoo shoo” curse look.

“Right, I’m done!”

Haruto finishes his work, and puts down the tablet, saying, “Are you done? Then hurry back now, you man slut of a Prince.”

“Stop calling me man slut, Gerota-chan.^[13]”

Nayuta spat without changing expression, and Haruto too retorted back with a smile on his face.

There’s a game called ‘Must be Popular’^[14], and the contest was about ‘who is the most popular with girls at school’, a board game that would seem to cause anyone to rip their friends faces apart. Back then, when everyone was playing this game, Haruto won with an overwhelming party, beating Nayuta and the other players, and from then on, Nayuta would call Haruto ‘Man Slut Prince’.

The reason for ‘Gerota’ was because Nayuta vomited onto Itsuki on the day of the awards ceremony, and Haruto saw it.

“Anyway, how are you doing there?”

Haruto asked Itsuki, who’s playing his PSP with a scowl.

“...Not good at all. The Murasama wouldn’t drop for me. I really want to kill the development staff now.”

“I’m asking about ideas for your new work, not asking you how are you doing playing your latest ‘Elminage’.”

Hearing that, Itsuki’s face got darker.

“That’s worse.”

Itsuki answers straight to be point, and Haruto gives a bitter smile.

“Senpai, come do pervy things with me to change the mood—”

“Don’t want to.”

Itsuki cut off Nayuta’s words without a second thought.

“Then let’s do something to change the mood.”

Haruto said.

“Fuu—” Itsuki sighed, and slowly got up, putting his PSP on the kotatsu. He was indicating that he accepted Haruto’s proposal.

“...So you accept the man slut Prince’s proposal.”

Nayuta noted unhappily.

“Let me think...” Haruto pondered for a while, and said, “Let’s play Turtle to get our heads moving.”

“...!”

Itsuki and Nayuta looked completely tense.

“Are you...really serious...”

“To be expected of you, man slut Prince. You like turtles that much?”

“Hm? If you aren’t confident, let’s change games, alright?”

Haruto’s little taunt baited both of them immediately.

“Don’t be silly! Have you forgotten that I have a perfect undefeated record when it comes to playing this game!?”

“I’ll advise you not to get too cocky about this, man slut Prince.”

“Alright then, let’s play. Also, your memory is way off, Itsuki.”

Turtle game—officially known as ‘Lateral Thinking Puzzle’, is a kind of mystery game, and one of the classic questions ‘Turtle Soup’ has become a symbolic term associated with it.

The rules were as follow—the questioner has to come up with one, and the ones answering could ask of hints from the questioner, who then can only answer Yes or No, and this continues until the final answer’s derived.

For a specific example ‘A certain man went to a restaurant and had some turtle soup. The man called in the chef, and asked “Is this really turtle soup?” and the chef answered ‘that’s right’. The man left the restaurant, and killed himself. Why is that?’

Then, the ones answering the question can ask questions like “does the man have any allergy?”, or “Did the chef lie to the man?”, questions that can only be answered with Yes or No. If the truth can be discovered at the end of all this, the one asking the question wins.^[15]

There is no need for additional tools, so such games are very trendy in author

meetings. There are similar questions that can be found online, and there are collection books of such stories sold in the market.

Itsuki and Haruto would typically come up with their original problems when playing such games, and limit the number of questions to be asked when playing.

Of course, it wouldn't be difficult for the questioner to win if he designs a ridiculous incident with a truth nobody can answer. However, once the truth is revealed, if the question is really a 'lame question' nobody could agree with, the questioner will be condemned with harsh, cruel words like 'you still have a lot more to work on before being a pro', or 'Try aiming for the newcomer prize again', or 'we can tell how twisted your fetishes are from your questions', or 'and you dare to ask such a lame question. I see that there's something really wrong with your head', so harsh are their words that even if they do win, they'll be mentally traumatized as a result.

Thus, the issue here would be whether anyone could design a wonderful question that had a chance of being answered in a limited number of questions, and that anyone could be convinced after hearing the answer.

For authors, Turtle Soup is a terrifying game that forcefully stakes an author's pride on the line.

"Now then, whoever thinks of a question first shall start. Limit of 15 turns. Alright, let's start."

Haruto gave the signal, and the 3 authors start to think of all kinds of questions.

After 3 minutes or so, "Right!" Itsuki's the first to raise his hand.

"I'll start first."

"Ahn, senpai, you can start on me whenever you like."

"Shut up already."

Itsuki dampened Nayuta's mood, and changed the question.

"A certain guy got married. The one he's married to is ugly, has a terrible personality, and has no charm to her at all. A perfectly flawed person inside out.

But the guy isn't unhappy at all, and has a happy life. Why's that?"

"The girl's his little sister, right?" "Isn't it because the girl's his little sister?"

Nayuta and Haruto answered at once.

Itsuki looked so stunned his face was cringing,

"Im-Impossible...how did you guess it without asking a question...! Are you able to read my heart or something!?"

"...It's a totally dumb question, no doubt about it. But I guess the description 'perfectly flawed person inside out' isn't used badly, so I'll spare you and won't attack your personality."

"It's a custom to hear you raise such shitty questions every time, senpai."

"Right, my turn next."

After a pause, Haruto asked a question,

"—A certain author went way past the due date, but the editorial branch did not reprimand the author, but was really grateful for that. Why's that?"

Both Itsuki and Nayuta widened their eyes.

They had a few experiences of missing the deadline completely, and dragged on for so long that they were thoroughly told off by the editorial branch. They could not think of how they would be thanked.

"...Is this a delusion of yours, you man slut Prince?"

"Is that considered a question? Nayu-chan?"

Nayuta immediately shook her head.

"No, I'll change the question a little...is this something that happened in modern Japan?"

There were often questions that were set in Outer Space or Jomon Period^[16], so one important point was to be certain of the background as soon as possible.

In the face of Nayuta's question, "Yes." Haruto answered.

"Yo-you're kidding! That currently-rotten-to-the-core thing in modern Japan called the Publishing Industry can't possibly have any concerns for an author

since it just keeps begging us to abide by our deadlines, and those dream-like words can't possibly happen! Haruto! You're an author too! You can understand, right!?"

"No, I never missed a deadline before so..."

"What...! Are you serious!? Damned traitor!"

"How about you think about why you're a Man Slut Prince before you act like some goody two shoes!?"

"Why is it that I end up being blamed in the end!?"

Faced with the unreasonable lecture from the duo, Haruto was taken aback.

"Kukuku...let's see if you choose whether to abide by deadlines or maintain our friendship."

"Such a wretched friendship."

"You took the virginity of many girls, and you can't break a single deadline?"

"I told you I'm not a man slut!"

"The regret formed from being unable to protect (the deadline) will make one stronger and gentler."

"You guys never had any intention of repenting, right!?"

"If you don't dare to go past the deadline, do you think you'll be able to break your duck?"

"Break...break my duck...?"

Those were some meaningless words, but there was a strange convincing feeling coming from Nayuta's mouth, and that rattled Haruto, but he shook his head immediately.

"S-stop trying to convince me to be a scumbag! Anyway, think about this one properly!"

"Hmm, you're right..." Itsuki ponders for a while, and says, "A question then!... is that author a little sister?"

"I don't know if there's an older brother or sister involved, but anyway, the

answer to that is ‘No’. Just to add, the author’s background isn’t important here.”

“Impossible...not a little sister, and praised for delaying...”

“...Can you stop wasting the number of possible questions, senpai?”

“...Sorry.”

Itsuki apologized sincerely, and then said,

“...But since the author’s background isn’t important...I guess it has nothing to do with whether he’s a bestselling author or about to be canned...so I guess the point’s about the editorial branch, right?”

“Ah, I see!” Nayuta said, “...Was that hint a little too obvious?” Haruto looked a little perturbed.

“Eh, was the editorial branch in some kind of emergency?” Nayuta asked.

“Yes.”

“Would it have helped the editorial branch to break away from that dangerous situation if the author missed the deadline on that day?” Itsuki asked.

“Yes.”

With consecutive affirmed replies, Itsuki and Nayuta could not help but smile.

However, they immediately showed grim faces after that.

“.....So if he missed that deadline on that day, it would help solve the problem...what’s going on...”

“...If the author’s work was published, would there be trouble with the editorial branch?”

Haruto thought for a while, and then answered Nayuta’s question, “Who knows? I guess the answer’s ‘No’ though.” He then shook his head, answering that.

“That’s a vague reply...but in any case, I guess it’s probably not because of the work itself.”

"I was wondering if it's because there was a rip-off of certain game character with strict copyright issues, or that Do***mon of Shogakukan was used for the novel...."

"You're really thinking of terrifying things here..."

Both of them continued to think, and Itsuki suddenly had an idea, "Wait... Haruto, repeat that question again."

"No problems. 'A certain author went way past the due date, but the editorial branch did not reprimand the author, but was really grateful for that. Why's that?'"

Haruto repeated the words exactly, and Itsuki asked, feeling unconfident.

"...The due date you're saying, refers to, that novel...no matter whether it's manga original or game script...the **submission deadline** for that novelist's work?"

Haruto grinned,

"No, of course."

"...! Oh...then, in any case...!"

"Eh? What's going on? It's not about being unable to meet the deadline...? I don't understand what that means?"

Itsuki ignored a completely bewildered Nayuta as the latter tilted her head, and continued to ask agitatedly, "So for the novelist, breaking the deadline would be doing so **in the physical sense!**?"

"Yes." Haruto affirmed with a bitter smile.

"Physical...? Ah!"

Nayuta too gave an enlightened look.

"Was the editorial branch room sealed up when the novelist went past the deadline?"

"Yes...you're getting closer."

"So if the novelist exceeds the deadline, did all the people in the editorial branch lose consciousness?"

"Yes. Some of them might not be knocked out, but nobody could move."

Haruto seemed to have given up as he shrugged his shoulders, and Itsuki grinned gleefully, answering, "I got it."

"...Here's how it is. The windows and doors were **sealed up**, resulting in carbon monoxide in the room that caused everyone in the editorial branch to pass out from carbon monoxide posioning. A novelist just happened to pop by, found that something was amiss, **broke the doors and windows**, saving the editorial branch from the crisis, and was thanked by everyone! 'Simekiri^[17] here can refer to both the due date, and 'places where everything's sealed up'—the simekiri in this situation doesn't refer to the due date of the draft, but that the editorial branch was sealed so tightly there's no ventilation!"

"Right. Actually, I did also come up with why the carbon monoxide was formed, but I won't nitpick on that. Your win."

"Fuhahahahaha!! This kind of question is too easy for me!"

Haruto smiled, Itsuki laughed out loud, and Nayuta clapped her hands, saying, "For a man slut Prince, I guess that's a decent question?"

"Why thanks. Your turn next, Nayu-chan."

"Got it. I'll really shock you with this amazing question, so much that your p*nis won't be able to get erect again."

Nayuta said a chilling matter, and calmly stated her question, "A man jumped. He died. Why?"

"Ah?"

The question was overly simple; Itsuki and Haruto both exclaimed in shock.

"Leaving that aside, are you sure that's all for your question?" Haruto asked.

"...If this is a some kind of a shitty question where you can't get the truth within 15 questions, I'm going to humiliate you with something worse than bitch, Lord Kani^[18].

"No problems."

Nayuta promised confidently, and the duo started to think, "Died after

jumping...? Was it suicide from a building, or a failed jump from a ski...? Erm, did the guy fall because he fell?"

"No."

"What...?" Haruto was shocked, and continued asking, "...Is it something similar to my question? Some kind of trap in the word 'jump'...? Then...did the guy owe any debt?"

In the financial world, paying the interest and delaying the principal loan back is called 'jump' by experts in the industry. In other words, Haruto assumed that it was a dispute over money.

But Nayuta's answer was—

"I don't know. In any case, I guess it's a 'no'."

"He doesn't owe any debt...eh...was the guy killed?"

"No."

"Does the guy have a little sister?"

"How would I know about that!?"

Nayuta coldly retorted at Itsuki's question "Please, stop wasting the questions with such a dumb one..." even Haruto could not help but grumble.

"Did the guy jump from a high place?"

"No."

"No!? So, he didn't die from a place high up, or his heart didn't stop when he was falling...it's not a situation where he died falling from somewhere high up...was the guy hanged to death?"

"No."

"Did the guy die inside the room?"

"No."

"Did the guy die outside the room?"

"Outside...nope, answer's no."

"Not inside or outside...? Did the guy die in a dangerous place?"

“Right.”

Haruto asked a few questions in succession, but was ultimately unable to grasp the crux of the situation.

“...Did it happen in modern Japan?”

Itsuki suddenly thought of the question Nayuta asked Haruto about, and tried asking. So— “...No.”

Nayuta’s eyebrows twitched as she answered, probably because she was rattled.

“It didn’t happen in modern Japan? So, is the setting based overseas?”

“Yes. Probably.”

“Probably...?”

“So it means that it doesn’t matter whether it’s local or overseas...? But I get the feeling that the setting’s an important point...”

And so, Haruto suddenly had an idea.

“Did this incident happen in reality?”

After a long pause, Nayuta replied,

“...No.”

“Ah, I see...I think I get it...”

Saying that, Haruto showed a bitter smile, appearing as though he was suffering from a migraine.

Itsuki was confused, and asked, bothered by this, “What does this mean?”

“...This has something to do with gaming, right?” Haruto asked.

“...Right.”

Nayuta curled her lips as she answered,

And while she remained so, Haruto revealed the answer to this question in an inquisitive manner, “Is the man called Spelunker?”

“...Right.”

Nayuta nodded in regret.

"Nayu-chan...to be honest, I think this question's really terrible. Well, it's way better than Itsuki's though."

"Mmmnnn..."

Haruto sighed, giving a bitter smile, while Nayuta groaned in displeasure.

On the other hand, "Hmm? Ahh? A video game?" Itsuki looked completely surprised.

"There's an old action game called 'Spelunker'." Haruto explained. "The protagonist's an adventurer, and the objective is to explore the ruins, but this protagonist dies all the time, whether by the shit from the bats, or by places a little shorter than he is. Anyway, the protagonist is infamous for having a weaker body than any ordinary person, kicking the bucket at any given moment. There are moments where if he jumps from a tall place, he'll die in mid-air before he crashes into the floor."

"...Ahh, I think I saw it somewhere on the internet before! It's a famous shitty game, I remember, right!?"

"Right right."

"Spelunker isn't some shitty game!!

Nayuta suddenly yelled out, looking displeased,

"It's true that Spelunker-san dies because of anything, but if you know that it's the game rules, and cautiously play the game, you'll understand that the game itself isn't unreasonable, that those that didn't follow the game rules probably caused the protagonist's death! Lots of people who never played the game said it's shitty because the protagonist is a famous weak character.

"H-heh..." "O-oh...?"

Both Haruto and Itsuki were stunned to see Nayuta lash out so agitatedly.

...Back when Kani Nayuta was being a NEET, she was addicted to freeware

games spread around on the internet, and could purchase old games by downloading. Even after becoming an author, she was passionate about such retro games.

“So, let’s play Spelunker.”

On Nayuta’s recommendation, Itsuki bought Spelunker on the Wii Virtual Console, and the trio challenged the game.

Later on, Haruto had a different understanding of the game, “It’s very difficult, but still passable if you’re careful. It’s not as unreasonable as its infamy states.” However, Itsuki would die at the beginning no matter how he tried, “It’s a shitty game alright!” and in his shame and fury, he concluded.

However, Itsuki gained an inspiration, and submitted an idea “a Spelunker little sister who dies to anything” to the editor for vetting, only to be rebuffed. Why was that?

Chapter 7

Getting Naked

It was the end of January.

Shirakawa Miyako had finished her college semester tests, and went to visit Itsuki's house.

Miyako rang the bell, and Itsuki opened the door.

"...Yo."

"Ah, Itsuki. I-I'm done with exams today, so I've got some time! I'm just here to tell you! So if you have anything you need, I'm fine with it. Don't mind—"

Miyako quickly said this with a blushing face, but upon seeing Itsuki's outfit she had a surprised look on her face.

"Are you going somewhere later?"

Itsuki was dressed in a coat, and he had a muffler wrapped around his waist. It looked as though he was about to head out. However, he shook his head at Miyako's question.

At this moment, Nayuta's voice could be heard from within the room.

"Senpai~, close the door. The wind's going to come in otherwise."

Hearing that, Itsuki motioned to Miyako. "Anyway, just come in."

"Y-yes," she tentatively replied as she entered.

The room was basically as cold as it was outside, and Nayuta, as thickly dressed as Itsuki, was lazing around under the kotatsu, flipping through a manga magazine.

Nayuta turned her head around to face Miyako, and softly greeted her. “Good work there, Mya-san.”

“I’m done, Nayu. Anyway, isn’t this room too cold!? Why isn’t the heater switched on?”

“...It broke down in the morning. It just had to break down today of all days... kukuku...I’m so disappointed in you...”

Itsuki also darted under the kotatsu, shivering as he glared at the heater.

“Did you call for repair?”

“Yeah, but the technician can only come by to repair it in 3 days. It’s thanks to this great old kotatsu that I’m able to bear this low temperature, but I can’t do any work.”

“Are you going to buy an electric stove from an appliances store?”

“Hm....looks like that is the only way out...”

Nayuta slowly got up.

“Senpai, what about this?”

Saying that, she opened the manga she had been reading.

It was a two-page spread of pretty girls in bikinis, yelling “It’s the sea!!” with bright smiles on their faces.

“...? Are you telling me to go swimming in this damn freezing weather?”

“No. I’m thinking about our school trip to Okinawa.”

“Okinawa...! There’s that too!”

“Right!”

Nayuta and Itsuki muttered to each other, while Miyako was feeling troubled.

“W-wait a second...what do you mean? I heard that it’s warm even in winter at Okinawa, but you’re not planning to head off to Okinawa immediately, right?”

“You’re right,” Itsuki affirmed.

Nayuta then continued, “Come with us to Okinawa too, Mya-san.”

“What? Me too?”

“Aren’t you bored since the exams are over? Ah, I can pay for your travel expenses.”

“I-it’s fine...I have my own savings...”

“Now it’s decided, senpai and Mya-san are going to Okinawa with me!”

“Eh? It’s decided!!? Ehh?”

Nayuta was grinning happily, and Miyako, being embarrassed, was unable to say anything.

So, the matter was settled so simply.

妹

As it was the offseason, they got their plane tickets and hotel rooms immediately. That evening, Itsuki, Nayuta and Miyako arrived in Okinawa.

Miyako arrived at the airport without bringing any luggage along, and looked completely lost.

“We really came to Okinawa...that’s weird...is Okinawa the kind of place you come to when you want to avoid the cold...?”

Itsuki let his black coat flutter like a cape and yelled,

“FUHAHAHA, Okinawa! I have returned!”^[19]

“Eh? Are you from Okinawa?”

“...No, but I came here once two years ago.”

“Really? Then where did you visit?”

“The hotel.”

"Of course you'll be going to the hotel. I'm asking which attractions did you go to, or which leisure places?"

"Nope, not really?"

"Huh?"

"Back then, it was August. The place was packed full with tourists, the sun was so strong, and it was so humid. I thought I was going to die...so I hid in the hotel for 3 days straight."

"Eh, are you an idiot?"

Miyako voiced out her thoughts, and Itsuki blushed.

"Wh-who are you calling idiot!? It's my right to choose what to do for my vacation!"

"That's right...but isn't that just stupid?"

"I-I'm not the stupid one...the one calling others stupid is stupid..."

Itsuki still regretted that he had wasted his vacation back then, so even though he was being told off, he could not go all out to refute.

"...I-I want to learn from my lesson from that last time, and enjoy Okinawa to the fullest...anyway, it's really hot, I don't think I have the strength to head out."

"You're right...I don't get the feeling that it's January..." Sweat was trickling down Nayuta's forehead.

"It's 17 degrees Celsius. To be expected of Okinawa...it's kinda warm... anyway, the reason why you guys are so hot now is because of your clothing."

"That's true." "Right."

Miyako pointed it out, and Itsuki and Nayuta removed their coats. However, they had worn a few layers of sweater underneath, so they were still hot.

For the time being, the trio bought some T-Shirts and underwear to wear, took a taxi to the hotel in Naha, and completed their check-in.

Room-wise, Itsuki took a single bedroom, while Miyako and Nayuta shared a double bedroom.

"Mya-san, can you switch rooms with Itsuki-senpai?"

"O-of course not!"

"Too bad...but I'm hoping to sleep in the same room as you."

Nayuta showed a fawning smile, and rubbed her body on Miyako like a cat, "Yes, yes," the latter patted her on the head and said.

The trio rested in their hotel rooms for a while, and went to a nearby bar for dinner.

They ordered Octopus rice, Bitter-gourd Campur, Rafute, Sea Grapes, Double Lined Fusilier and other famous Okinawan dishes. Itsuki and Miyako toasted to each other with Hibiscus beer. (It is a beverage brewed with beer and Hibiscus extract. It has a little sweet and sour taste, and is very refreshing, definitely a treat to drink in really hot weather. The Hibiscus extract can be bought on the internet, so it can be brewed at home. It is better to brew it with beer with a clear refreshing taste, and best with Orion beer or other white beer.) Nayuta, being underage, could only treat herself to Hibiscus juice.

"...Hm, really nice."

"Yep. Goes well with the Bitter-gourd Campur."

Seeing Itsuki and Miyako enjoy themselves with the beer and the dishes, Nayuta enviously puffed her cheeks.

"Mmm. I want to drink beer too."

"No way. Wait until you're an adult."

"Right. Brats like you should just drink juice."

"...Senpai, you don't take me as a love interest because I'm a kid, right?"

"Pff!?"

Itsuki immediately spat out all the beer in his mouth.

"...Eh, what did you say? I couldn't hear."

"...Isn't that exaggerated response and pretending not to hear anything too fake?"

Nayuta gave Itsuki a displeased look while the latter blatantly lied with a forced tone, saying, “Eh? What did you say? Music’s too loud. Can’t hear you.”

Nayuta nonchalantly continued, and Itsuki too showed a mask-like stoic face as he blatantly played dumb.

“I like you, senpai.”

“Hm? What did you say about a pike?”^[20]

“Go out with me.”

“Alright, where are we going?”

“Let’s have sex.”

“I prefer the trumpet to the saxophone though.”

“...I’m starting to get interested in how long you can play dumb, senpai. You can feel how round they are.”^[21]

“Round? A round of beer? Underaged kids aren’t allowed to drink beer.”

“You can jam it in though!”

“So, traffic jam or strawberry jam?”

“...That’s a bit forced, isn’t it?”

“...You too, who in the world confesses like you do?”

“Please come inside!”^[22]

“Speaking of Jouji Nakata, that performance of the character ‘Fudou Dairen’ in Occult Maiden was done by him. Really great acting. Seriously, that’s not much of a confession!”^[23].

“...I’ll switch to something more tasteful—the moon is beautiful.”

“I guess.”

“Huh? Eh, that was Natsume Soseki’s—”

“I know! I’m playing dumb because I know what you’re getting at!”^[24]

“I love how you are, senpai.”

“...You want to eat ice? No, don’t wanna...hey. I can’t hang on anymore, so

can you stop?"

"Couldn't you have just allowed me to drink?"

"Anyway, kid, just finish the egg and be quiet."

Itsuki stabbed his chopstick into the boiled egg of the Rafute, and brought it to Nayuta's mouth.

"Ahm."

Nayuta took the egg into her mouth, gnawed at it while staring at the chopstick, and swallowed it.

"Nchuu...rerorero...chuu chuuu..."

"Ho-how long are you going to keep licking?"

Itsuki saw Nayuta finish the egg and made some noises as she licked at the chopstick, and he hurriedly pulled it out from her mouth. There was a trail of drool from the tip of the chopstick to Nayuta's mouth.

"Fufu...senpai, that's some unique fetish you have, bringing your eggsack to a girl without thinking."^[25]

"Stop being so lewd about this!"

Itsuki continued eating with a bushing face, and Nayuta picked up the deep-fried chicken with her chopsticks.

...While Itsuki and Nayuta were bickering away, Miyako was left flustered as she looked back and forth between them.

妹

After dinner, they returned to their hotel bedrooms. Itsuki took out his

laptop, and began to work.

He had only had one glass of beer, so he did not feel drunk at all.

After a scrumptious meal, he felt happy, and the night breeze blowing through the window felt refreshing. Also, the season in January sharpened his senses. Thus, he could not stop writing.

I might as well stay in Okinawa all the time. Itsuki thought as he continued working, but after almost 2 hours, he started to tire. Then, someone knocked on the door.

Itsuki opened the door, and found that it was Miyako standing outside.

Her hair was slightly drenched, and she was holding a bag from a family mart.

"I saw a lot of rare beers down there, so I bought them. Drink some with me."

Miyako said that with an absurd tone, and her expression was a little lost, her cheeks blushing slightly. It looked as if she had drunk quite a bit.

"...Where's the crab lord?"^[26]

"Nayu went to sleep after her bath."

"I see."

Miyako entered Itsuki's room, took out a few cans from the bag, and placed them on the table. There was Chu-Hai from the southern countries, Southern Star, Special X—all kinds of beer that could not be bought in the family marts on the mainland.

"The Okinawa family marts are really interesting. They sell octopus rice and pork with egg onigiri, and also local limited burgers and snacks. Oh yeah, there's also some Oden with Okinawan soba. Same goes for the vending machines, lots of local-only juice."

"I know. Last time I came here, I got all of my meals from the marts."

"That's not something to be proud of, right...?"

Miyako looked stunned, opened the can of Southern Star, and started drinking.

Itsuki too drank from the she-quasar and pineapple flavor from the Southern

countries. It was only then that he realized he had not drank, and was thirsty for quite a while.

“How’s that?”

“Well, great.”

Itsuki gulped down to quench his thirst, and answered.

“Hm. This one’s ordinary though...it’ll be great with the Hibiscus extract.”

Both of them finished up their first cans, and started chatting.

As Miyako started scanning for what she wanted to drink next, she said, “Hey, Itsuki.”

“Hm?”

“What do you think of Nayu?”

“She’s a pervert,” Itsuki immediately answered.

“We-well, about that...I guess! But she kept saying that she likes you, she likes you, so...haven’t you thought about going out with her?”

“...What’s there to think about...I plainly rejected her before. A long time back.”

Itsuki was half-drunk, his eyes starting to blur as he said that.

“Eh! Really? When was it?”

“...”

Itsuki opened a can of Special X, took a swig at it, “Kek.” He made a cute sound as he burped, and stammered somewhat as he recalled what happened.

3 days had passed since he was rejuvenated by Nayuta’s debut work. Nayuta visited him at his home, hoping for a reply to her confession, and Itsuki immediately refused.

“I can’t go out with you.”

Nayuta immediately collapsed into tears. Itsuki recalled the guilt he felt back then. That was when he had understood something; that if he made a girl cry right in his face, even if he did nothing wrong, he would feel like an incorrigible

scumbag.

When Nayuta left the room, she hid her bawling face and whimpered, "... Hashima-senpai, are you still willing to talk to me?". Triggered by his guilt, Itsuki was a little hesitant, and answered, "O-of course...we're both authors. I'll be in your care."

...However, he never expected her to come back to play the next day.

Itsuki was not mentally prepared, but considering that he said 'I'll be in your care', it would be inappropriate for him to shoo her off. Though troubled, he welcomed her into his room, and they started playing video games together.

Ever since then, Nayuta would pop by Itsuki's place from time to time, and their relationship continued on until this point.

"Heh..."

"What's with that face?"

"Hmm~ I thought you were just a scumbag who let a cute girl chase you and deliberately not give her a clear answer, keep a vague relationship, and just wanted her to have your baby. I was wrong about you."

"...So that's what you thought."

Itsuki narrowed his eyes, and Miyako sheepishly gave a wry smile.

"Then why didn't you go out with Nayu? She's cute—ah, whatever. Ignore that."

"?"

Itsuki looked puzzled, and Miyako deliberately averted her eyes, playing dumb.

—Why don't you try go out for a date too?

Miyako thought of the questions she was often asked by her friends, and every single time, she was perturbed.

If someone goes out with someone not because she likes that person, but because he's handsome, smart, some football team captain, rich, has a bright future or so on, Miyako felt that that was fine, and that there was a possibility

of her falling in love with that kind of guy once they began dating. However, Miyako disagreed that she was being treated like a weirdo by her friends simply because she did not go out with a boy.

“...Don’t you have any feelings for Nayu?”

Miyako repeated again, and Itsuki looked nonchalant as he answered, “Humph. That’s a stupid question.”

He averted his face, and muttered.

“...It’s because I still have some feelings that I don’t know what to do.”

Upon seeing Itsuki’s red sidelong face, Miyako had the urge to cry out loud.

“...Miyako, have you read the crab lord’s books?” Itsuki lowered his eyes and muttered.

“...Nope,” Miyako answered.

“...If you don’t have any plans to be an author in the future, you should go look them up. If you never read them, it’ll be no different from having wasted your life. If you have the time to read my books, you might as well read Kani Nayuta’s works as well...”

Itsuki muttered away, and immediately fell asleep.

Saying those words was not like his usual self, and that shocked Miyako quite a bit.

“...Looks like you have quite a bit of issues there...”

妹

The next day, the trio were having their meal at the hotel restaurant, discussing their plans for the day.

"It's our first time to Okinawa. Shuri City and Churaumi Aquarium are must-goes, but are there any recommendations for Okinawa in winter? Don't you have any place you want to go?"

"Ah~?"

"Nya~?"

Miyako inquired, while Itsuki and Nayuta were slow in their reactions.

Their eyes were half-awake, nibbling on their fried fish.

"I! Said! Don't you have any other places you want to visit!?"

"...Keep your voice down. My head's ringing..."

Itsuki was frowning.

"What, Itsuki? You have a hangover?"

"...Impossible...I only had a glass last night. How is it possible for me to be drunk...?"

"1 glass...you don't have any recollection of what happened last night?"

"...? I was writing last night, and for some reason, I ended up sleeping..."

It appeared Itsuki really could not remember what happened the previous night. Miyako sighed.

Miyako considered that if he were to ask her what had happened the previous night, she would reveal that she kept drinking and enjoyed watching Itsuki's sleeping face, and decided to remain quiet.

"So, any place you want to go?"

"Mmm...an uninhabited island."

"Huh!?" Miyako tilted her head.

"...Next volume, I plan to have an event where the protagonist drifts to an empty island with his little sister. If possible, I want to get some material."

"An uninhabited island...maybe there is one. I'll start looking for a bit."

—And so, the trio left for an uninhabited island.

Miyako asked a hotel staff member, and went to lunch early to ask the canteen staff, finding out that there was an island ‘with probably almost no one around’.

“Good thing Mya-san’s around huh, senpai?”

“...Ahh.”

Itsuki nodded at Nayuta’s words.

Itsuki could handle jobs like booking tickets and hotel rooms, jobs that could be done on the computer, but he was incapable of going around and asking for information. Miyako handled this job with her top-notch communication skills, and he was grateful for it.

The canteen staff were correct; it appeared that there was no one visiting this island other than Itsuki and the others.

The trio walked down a trail thanks to the smartphone’s camera function, and arrived on the other side of the island.

Beyond the beach was a wide, blue sea.

“So pretty...” Miyako uttered in marvel.

“It’s! The! Sea!”

Nayuta exclaimed in a rhythmic manner. She took off her shoes, and teetered towards the sea.

“The sea is really cold after all.”

Miyako followed Nayuta in removing her shoes, and stepped into the clear seawater, saying.

“Since we’re finally here, let’s get swimming, Mya-san!”

“What nonsense are you saying? We didn’t bring our swimsuits.”

Miyako was flabbergasted, but Nayuta remained as she was.

“What’s wrong with not having swimsuits? No one else is around.”

And while Miyako was looking on, stunned, Nayuta stripped off her T-shirt without hesitation.

"Wait, wh-what are you doing, Nayu!? Itsuki, look over there right now!"

"I-I got it!"

Without needing anyone to tell him, Itsuki instinctively turned to look away from Nayuta.

While this ruckus was going on, Nayuta had stripped herself of her shirt, skirt, and even her undergarments without hesitation. She shouted 'Bashaann!' and squealed as she fell backwards into the sea.

"H-Hey! Put on your clothes now!"

Nayuta widened her eyes in shock and said, "It's so cold, Mya-san!"

"Well of course it is, isn't it?"

"Ah, but it doesn't feel like it'll stay this cold though. Come on in, Mya-san."

Nayuta got up as she splashed water on Miyako. When she lifted her arms, those two hills that were rather plump for a skinny girl would shake.

"Stop fooling around! It's cold! I'll get wet!"

"Come join us too, senpai!"

"Y-you idiot!"

Itsuki turned his head away, not looking at Nayuta as he ran off.

"Stop fooling around, Nayu!"

"Didn't we bathe together yesterday, Mya-san?"

"So what?"

The clear sea dazzled under the shine of the sun, and Nayuta, shaking her silver hair and white body nicely, looked like a pixie. Even Miyako, of the same sex as her, started to turn beetroot, her heart racing.

It felt like a fantasy world that did not belong in reality. If she joined in on this game, she too could become a resident of this fantasy world, and a strange sense of excitement was born within her.

And she, lured by this irresistible urge—

“Ah seriously! Itsuki! Go keep watch over there! If you dare turn around to peek, I’ll definitely snap your neck!”

And before Itsuki could answer, Miyako stripped herself without a second thought, “Ahh, it’s cold!” and shouted desperately as she chased after Nayuta into the sea.

“I’m here, Mya-san.”

“You dare splash me?”

“Nyaha.”

Miyako really enjoyed herself as she started splashing water at Nayuta.

And while continuing this water battle with Nayuta, Miyako yelled,



“Arrrrrrrgggggggghhhhhhhh! What am I doing—!!!”

It was Okinawa, but it was still the end of January, and they were playing around naked in the sea like idiots. She was doing something she normally

wouldn't, and if her college friends saw her, one had to wonder what they would think.

"Nyahaha!"

And this girl, having fun like a kid who admired her as an older sister, was someone even the amazing professional author Hashima Itsuki felt inferior to, the latter even describing his own works as simply 'my books'. Even in the world of professionals, she seemed to be an amazing prodigy of a writer.

Miyako only read light novels, manga, video games and anime after knowing Itsuki, and Kani Nayuta's novels were the only ones she had never read.

She had a vague premonition that if she were to read Nayuta's works, she would never be able to get along with the latter as normal, so she had been avoiding it.

But Nayuta's 'Scenery' series was a bestseller, and most bookstores would set her works at obvious places. Even when ordering books on Amazon, they were often seen under the 'Customers who bought this item also bought' and the top half of the bestselling columns, so it was really difficult to ignore them. Also, every book had hundreds of reviews, most of them sounds of praises, with thoughts like 'this book really changed me', or 'this book saved my life' being beyond praise and almost worship-like.

It is said that heaven does not create one man above or below another man, however, the reality is that humans are not equal—so said the old man on the 10,000 yen note.^[27]

Miyako too agreed with that saying.

There's no such thing as equality in people.

There's no way I'm as valuable as Kani Nayuta.

I don't have any value compared to Kani Nayuta.

I don't have the right to ruin her romance.

Tears welled out.

But nobody else found out, for those tears were quickly washed away by the water Nayuta splashed on her.

On the other hand,

“...What do I do now? That’s my line...”

Itsuki sat down, leaning on a rock as he looked up at the sky, muttering to himself.

He could hear two completely naked girls having fun from behind the rock.

If anyone were to ask if he wanted to look, the answer, of course, was a resounding yes.

He probably wouldn’t have been discovered if he had peeked from the blind spot at the rock, but Itsuki suppressed his desires with all his might.

He came to this uninhabited island to obtain materials, but the captain warned him not to get lost. So, he could not go adventuring alone.

“So this is how it feels to be better off dead...?”

Thinking that he should have brought his laptop along, Itsuki spent the time by bitterly suppressing his urges.

妹

They later returned from the island to Okinawa, visited Shuri City, and then strolled down Naha’s International Road, buying a few local gifts.

On the 3rd day, the trio went to the beautiful aquarium, and were marvelled by the whale-sharks, spending a few hours there. They went to A&Ws for burgers at dinner, and Nayuta got addicted to root beer, drinking 5 cups in one go, and had an upset stomach that almost resulted in the trio being unable to get onto the plane. Despite this sudden situation, the trio managed to make it

back to Tokyo safely.

Itsuki nearly froze due to the cold Tokyo nights, and barely managed to hang on until he got home and hid under the kotatsu. The air conditioning was repaired the following day, and he finally got back to his usual daily routine.

During the trip, Itsuki had become a maniacal fan of whale-sharks, and bought a lot of related materials. He completed his new proposal on the flight back (a story about an older brother being cursed to become a whale-shark and live with his naked little sister on an uninhabited island). After reading it, the editor-in-charge, Toki, said, “Maybe it can work. This can be written as a fantasy love story with a childish premise, and create Hashima Itsuki’s new realm.” While that was a relatively positive opinion, the proposal was not accepted, for the older brother never changed back into a human and lived together with his little sister as a whale-shark. Itsuki insisted on this riveting climax, but was never able to get the editor-in-charge’s understanding.

Chapter 8

God

It's late mentioning at this point, but the novels Itsuki Hashima, Haruto Fuwa and Nayuta Kani write are considered within the category of 'light novels'.

Light novels, or as dubbed, ranobe.

In recent years, light novels had become a familiar term for common people, but the actual definition remained undefined, and often, there were people arguing (pointlessly) over it.

The reason why there's a difficulty to define light novels is because, while it is possible to categorize the contents, packaging, font type, authors, publishers, reader demographic, story genres, or personalities of the characters, there would be countering examples to disprove the claim.

In the work 'light novel club'^[28], there is one scene of one of the protagonists, Misaki Asaba reading several books that any ordinary person might classify as light novels, and then declare that 'it feels like such works are considered light novels'. While it might be a crude definition, without any given definition, and only based on vague impressions, this might be a logical way of rationalizing it.

So, assuming that we're imitating Misaki Asaba, and define light novels as "In summary, those printed by publishers that are recognized as publishers of light novels, Shogakukan's GAGAGA Bunko, with novel covers that (typically) are anime or manga-styled" with a soft, fluffy feeling.^[29]

Speaking of which, for most of the products out there in the market, besides books, the packaging is an important factor.

Packaging is the summary that attracts the looks from the customers, and induce them to purchase the goods. Taking books as example, the cover, title,

obi strip and summary are all part of the packaging.

Amongst them, the most important aspect to a light novel, and what can be called the crux of the packaging, are the illustrations (with few exceptions).

No matter how charismatic the characters showing up in the story are, no matter how moving the scenes are, it's all for naught if there's no way to attract customers into picking up and browsing a book.

Of course, there's no hundred percent guarantee in the world that there will be sales as long as the packaging is complete. However, it's an undebatable fact that with poor packaging, there's no way the product can stand on the same standing as the competitors (will be read). This phenomenon doesn't just apply to light novels; anyone who had their products on display will surely experience such heartbreakingly pain.

Thus, for light novel authors like Itsuki, the illustrators in charge of providing illustrations for them are extremely important entities that will affect their fates —simply put, they are basically Gods. The world of illustrators is similar to a world of gods, and thus, there are omnipotent gods like Zeus, somewhat unreliable gods, some gods that are oozing with lots of potential but lack stability, and some rebellious gods that will create troubles that damage the work, author and publisher (a mere few of them), but basically, they are all great existences worthy of respect. [\[30\]](#)

...And at this point, Itsuki's playing games with one such god.

The boy seated across the kotatsu from Itsuki is called Setsuna Ena. [\[31\]](#)

He has an immature appearance, one reminiscent of an impish puppy, as diminutive as Itsuki in terms of height, and slender in build.

His hair's dyed in three colors, with blue as base. His clothing style is probably based on Harajuku, befitting of the colourful, glittering personality. [\[32\]](#)

He's sixteen years old.

He's the extremely popular illustrator in charge of Itsuki's second work 'Creation of a Little Sister (Genesis Star) of the New World', pen name 'Puriketsu' [\[33\]](#)

He specialized in drawing cute girls, and it's said only he can draw the 'cute, bouncy asses'. [34]

The first volume of 'Genesis Star of the New World' remains the topseller of all of Itsuki's works, and it can be said that he's the benefactor who led Itsuki into the realm of a 'bestselling author'.

This ass god isn't just appreciative of Itsuki's works; he has quite an intimate relationship with Itsuki himself. After the work's done, he would drop by from time to time to look for the latter.

"37 points."

Once the game points were counted, Itsuki stated his score.

"I only got 35. Eh~ Too bad! Just one more sheep!"

"Fuhahaha! This is the difference in ability ahhahaha!"

Itsuki boasts proudly, not holding back at all.

What they're playing is a tabletop game called 'Agricola Farm Animals', a remade two player version of the topselling game 'Agricola (two to five players). It's a two player version of Agricola, so in Japan, it's called 'DualCola'.

The players in the game roleplay as farmers, and the objective is to maximize the facilities of the farms they manage, and increase the number of animals. Within eight turns, the player that can run the most prosperous farm wins.

The biggest difference between DualCola and the original is that the former takes away the critical element of dice and card draws and all other factors that involve the critical element of 'luck'. Like Go, shogi, Chess, Othello, it's a game with both sides have perfect information.

A game without the element of luck means that it's most fun when facing a player with similar ability. The one closest to Itsuki in terms of ability is Setsuna. [35]



"It's really fun playing DualCola with you, sensei. Let's have another round!"

Setsuna laughs heartily, asking for a rematch, but Itsuki shook his head, refusing.

"I'll have to stop here for today. Right now, I have to come up with a new proposal."

"Eh?" Setsuna curled his lips unhappily, and his already immature looking face was looking more like a kid.

"What Eh? You're the one who came running over to my house without talking to me."

Setsuna hardly would not contact others beforehand. He doesn't have a traditional cellphone or smartphone, and the only way to contact him would be the telephone set at home and the email on the computer. He often slipped out from home, hardly checked his email, and whenever he's was focused on drawing, he would not pick up his phone; thus, it was difficult to contact him. When creating 'Genesis Star of the New World', he caused a lot of trouble for others (especially the editor-in-charge Kenjirou Toki), and caused a hole in Toki's stomach.

"What's the problem, sensei? You're always at home anyway."

"Fuahaha! You idiot! I went out to Okinawa until yesterday!"

"You serious!? Amazing! That's great!"

"Fufufu, be jealous all you want...ah, here's a present for you."

Itsuki handed a box of chinsukou to Setsuna. [36]

"Thank you! Is Okinawa fun?"

"Yeah. I went to look at the whale sharks."

"I heard of them too! They're large, aren't they!?"

"Yeah, shockingly large. I was stunned when I had a look up close. Really couldn't help but be moved seeing such a large creature."

"Oh? Speaking of which, don't you have a whale shark as your phone accessory?"

Setsuna's sharp eyes notice the accessory dangling from Itsuki's smartphone.

"Looks like you really like the whale sharks."

"Yeah, so much that I wanted to have a whale shark as a protagonist for my new work."

"Really?"

"...But I got rejected by that damned editor-in-charge."

"Really!? What's the story about?"

Itsuki share the story of the whale shark bro and the naked little sister that was rejected the previous day. [37]

"So cool! As to be expected of you, sensei!"

"Hahaha. Isn't that so?"

Upon seeing Setsuna look so impressed, Itsuki grinning away from ear to ear.

"But sensei, how do fish and humans mate!? I remember seeing salmon hatch eggs, and they spray the sperms onto the eggs!"

"No problems. You see, amongst fishes, sharks are exceptions. They receive the sperm inside, so they have organs for that purpose."

"Really!? So sharks have penises too?"

"Yeah. The protagonist is a shark, and not other kinds of fish, so at the moment of climax, it would be a perfect, god-like scene that goes with the setting...! But that damn incompetent editor-in-charge doesn't understand my hard work..." [38]

"I'll try drawing it!"

Setsuna suddenly says this, takes out a mechanical pencil and sketch book, and starts doodling away cleanly.

"What are you..."

While Itsuki watches on flabbergasted, the illustration's completed in the blink of an eye.

"This is...!"

What Setsuna illustrates is the mating scene of the whale shark and the pretty girl in the water Itsuki just described.

“Something like this!”

The naked pretty girl’s looking blissful, while the thing at the lower abdomen of the large shark’s reaching into her.

If seen from afar, it might look like a pretty girl just swimming around with a whale shark. However, there’s an unspeakable lewdness lingering between the girl and the fish. The whole illustration however gives a mystical feeling, one that gives the feeling of a person lying around in the tropical blue seas. [39]

The most important point being that the girl’s round voluptuous butt look sexy.

It’s a high-level piece of work, such that it’s hard to believe it’s done by just a mechanical pencil; the quality is so high that it can be used as a novel illustration. Itsuki even felt that if it’s presented to Toki, the latter might even nod and let it pass.

“...”

Itsuki stares at the illustration wordlessly for a while.

This illustration encapsulates the imagination in his head, the climax of the action he tried writing—no, it might be more exciting than what he imagined.

“I feel like eating salmon roe!”

Setsuna suddenly mentioned for no reason.

“Huh? Salmon roe?”

Itsuki gives a bothered look, as he’s unable to catch up to the thought process.

“We’re talking about salmon before this, right? So I suddenly have the craving for it!”

“...You can go eat by yourself.”

“Come along with me, sensei!”

“...Fine, I don’t mind.”

Itsuki nodded without thinking much.

妹

It was after the sun set that Itsuki and Setsuna arrived in Hokkaido.

“Why did it end up like this...”

The expression itsuki gives as he stands in the New Chitose airport is exactly the same as Miyako when the latter landed in Okinawa a few days ago.

Itsuki originally intended to head to the nearby sushi store to have salmon roe, “If we’re going to eat, let’s have the super duper salmon roe! Speaking of that, it has to be Hokkaido, right!?” so Setsuna propose.

Itsuki, still feeling nostalgic about Okitana, then chimes in, “I just went to Okinawa two days ago, so I guess I might as well go to Hokkaido too!” So he immediately booked the tickets and the hotel room. It just so happened to be the winter season in, so it was somewhat difficult to book the room and tickets, but in the end, he managed to do so. After calming down and thinking about it, he’s left wondering ‘where’s the ‘might as well’ part to this?’”

They made this trip to Hokkaido for salmon roe, but Setsuna kept yapping about being hungry, so they entered the ramen shop at the airport for some miso ramen, “I guess anyone coming to Hokkaido should be eating ramen!” so Setsuna commented.

Shouldn’t it be seafood rice bowl!? Itsuki thought, but seeing how good the ramen is, his anger subsided.

This is the first time Itsuki arrived in Hokkaido, and he wants to enjoy this trip.

The duo then take the train, intending to towards the hotel in Sapporo, but then—

"So-so-so-so-so cold...! It's freezing! Who's able to stay here, man! I'm going home!"

The moment they walk out of Sapporo station, the incoming gales of cold winds cause Itsuki to shiver. It's snowing out there, signs of blizzards, and visibility everywhere is poor.

Setsuna's dressed less than Itsuki, but he's able to hum GLAY's "Winter, Again"^[40] without a care in the world as he continues on with light steps.

"Hm hm hm—hm—hmhmhm-hm-hm-hm-hm-hmm-hm♪"

In fact, he's singing the lyrics (decently at that), but the lyrics aren't written down as there's an unwillingness to pay copyright fees to JASRAC.^[41]

"Bring people to Hokkaido in winter...I'm thinking Takuro's a super masochist...hey, you sure the hotel's over there?"^[42]

Itsuki suddenly feels uneasy as he asks, and Setsuna shows a stunned look.

"Eh? Shouldn't it be this direction?"^[43]

"...Hold on a moment."

Itsuki opens the map on the smartphone, and searches for the hotel.

"...We're going the wrong way damn it! Ah goodness! Hmm hmm hmhmhm♪"^[44]

Itsuki gives up, and starts humming 'White Breath' by T.M. Revolution^[45], using the cellphone as a navigator to the hotel. (As stated, the lyrics can't be written).

妹

The next morning, the duo finds a shop in the city, and order a very luxurious

meal of seafood bowl rice.

The sea urchin, salmon roe and crab are overflowing from the bowl, and with the large tailed sweet prawns and scallops resting on it, it's obvious that the ingredients outnumber the rice beneath.

"This is way too much, isn't it?" "Yahaha! Never seen such a seafood bowl rice!" The duo, stunned by the scrumptious amount of food, start to dig in happily. However, once they're done, they both look worn out, looking terrified of the sea urchin and salmon roe.

"Feels nauseous having to eat so much sea urchin and salmon roe at one go..."

"I never got down to understanding the reasoning behind putting perilla leaves and ginger strips on the seafood rice bowl, but I misunderstood them...I want some leaves."

Anyway, their initial motive of eating salmon roe's accomplished.

The duo booked a room for the night, and the return flight's departing after noon, so both of them check out, head to the airport, shop around at the waiting hall, and have some Genghis Khan^[46] for lunch.

Right when they're about to prepare for flight boarding...

"Sensei, I want to stay here for more than a week or so."

Setsuna looks at the poster of the Sapporo snow festival stuck on the passageway, and suddenly says such inscrutable words.

"What are you say?"

"Since we're here, I want to look at the snow festival."

"That's way too much of a whim!"^[47]

"Do you want to come along, sensei?"

"Don't wanna. Too cold. Too many people."

"Really! I'll cancel my flight and say bye bye here, sensei! Thanks for your chinsuko!"

"Hey, hey..."

Setsuna waves with a smile, leaving behind a stunned Itsuki as he leaves.

“That guy just does whatever he wants...”

So Itsuki has no choice but to return to Tokyo alone.

Once he reaches his room, he switches on the air conditioning, and ducks under the kotatsu.

The illustration of the whale shark and the pretty girl remains on the kotatsu, and Itsuki’s mesmerized by it.

Packaging is a combination of various factors. Products won’t sell just because of a single element, or won’t stop selling because of a single element. The most undebatable fact remains that for light novels, cover illustrations remain the most important. But no matter how outstanding the illustrations or, it’s possible that they don’t match the tastes of the consumers, or might clash with the logo, waist obi, title design, or the sizing of the book. If there is too much information in the illustration, it will appear chaotic; such situations may possibly happen. The value of an ‘illustration’ might not necessarily be equivalent to the value of a ‘cover illustration’.

However, there are a rare few ‘overwhelmingly outstanding’ illustrations that can overcome the personal tastes of the readers and other obstructing elements. Even without adjusting the sizing of the bunko, the illustration will not lose value, and will undoubtedly attract the attention of the readers. The illustrations by Setsuna Ena are undoubtedly one of these.^[48]

About a year ago—when the full series of ‘Genesis Star of a New World’ is completed, and Itsuki’s about to prepare writing the next work, Toki proposed to have Puriketsu (Setsuna Ena) continue being the illustrator for the next work.

(Though Toki’s stomach was ruptured) The sales performance of ‘Genesis Star of a New World’ was considered successful, and Setsuna himself does like Itsuki’s work, so it’s to be expected that Toki would make such a decision.^[49]

But Itsuki refused.

“For the next work, it’s better to have someone else who can abide by the deadline, won’t disappear out of a sudden, won’t be uncontactable, and will play the role of a proper person in society.” So Itsuki said to Toki, and while the

latter agreed, he ended off by saying, “Ah too much. Personally, I do hope Puriketsu-sensei will continue collaborating with you, but since the author says so, guess I got no choice. Too bad!” He accepted Itsuki’s request as he said that, but there’s another reason as to why Itsuki refused to work with Puriketsu. For Itsuki, deadlines are just basically just targets to work hard towards. If he intends to polish the work as much as possible, he won’t bother with the deadline. [50]

The real reason is that he simply feels that ‘my work is no match for Setsuna’s illustrations’. It’s not that Setsuna’s illustrations are poor for Itsuki’s works.

“My novels pale in comparison to your illustrations, so I still can’t partner with you.” [51]

When Setsuna asked Itsuki why he wasn’t allowed to be the illustrator for the new work, Itsuki confessed as such. Hearing that, “I like this immature side to you, sensei.” Setsuna heartily smiles.

—When I train myself to surpass **that person’s** ability, I’ll prepare for everything and collaborate with ‘Illustrator: Puriketsu’ create ‘a super duper work in terms of both content and illustration’, and climb up to the peak of the light novel world. [52]

This is Itsuki’s current target.

After seeing the illustration Setsuna left behind, the passion he had in the beginning starts to rekindle. After trips to Okinawa and Hokkaido, his vitality has recovered to an ample level, and he can work with enthusiasm. The one most important job is to upload this illustration through a scanner, and use it as a desktop background.

While Itsuki’s wondering about this, he receives a call from the editor-in-charge Toki.

“I’m not done with the new proposal.”

Itsuki says in an annoyed manner once he picks up the phone.

“Hm? Ahh, I’m not calling for that reason.”

“Huh?”

"Is Puriketsu-sensei with you?"

"...No(t now)." "Really...if Puriketsu-sensei looks for you, drag him to the editorial branch even if you have to cut his legs off. I'll bear responsibility."

"...Di-did something happen?"

There's some trace of insanity in Toki's voice that leave Itsuki's trembling.

"...He's not done with the cover of the novel that's to be published this month. The deadline's going to pass soon...I've been going to his house every day over the past week, but he hasn't been at home..."

"I-I see."

Setsuna's working as an illustrator for another of Toki's authors. Toki did refuse beforehand, but as the author insisted, he could only agree half-heartedly. As expected, it appears he's suffering.

"Itsuki, you know where Buriketsu-sensei is? That damned brat. I'm going to kill him in a gory manner...once I get the cover illustration..."

"I-I...don't...?"

Itsuki can only pretend to play dumb, having realized that he might be caught in turmoil for going on a trip with Setsuna.

There's no doubt that Setsuna's a god of the highest tier, but Itsuki quietly hopes that the next time they partner up, he'll be a god who won't cause too much stress to the editor-in-charge's stomach.

恵

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刹

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【えな・せつな】

年齢：16歳

なんか勉強とかタルくて学校やめたけど働くのもタルくて最初はマンガ家になろうと思ったけどなんかマンガ家ってチヨー大変そうだったからもっとラクそうなイラストレーターになろっかなって思ってやったらなんかなれてマジ人気になってバない。
主な作品：『新世界の創始者』『SILLIES』



パラメータ

才能

生活力

速度

②

①～⑤

④

コミュ力

分析力

瞬間を生きる現実
ナメてる系男子

Chapter 9

North-South Spring Roll

On the evening three days after the trip to Hokkaido, Chihiro arrived at Itsuki's apartment to cook dinner.

Chihiro wordlessly slipped the apron over the windbreaker, and got ready to cook. Itsuki asked, "Ah, wait a sec."

"? What is it?"

"There's crab."

"Miss Kani?" Chihiro's head tilted slightly. [\[53\]](#)

"No, not the Kani Lord."

Itsuki said as he stood up, and went to the fridge.

There was a full snow crab, more than 50cm in length, stuffed inside.

"Crab!" Chihiro's eyes widened.

"Where did this come from?"

"Bought it from Hokkaido."

This crab was delivered on that particular morning, and as it was too big, it was hard to put inside the freezer, so Itsuki could only put it inside the fridge. As a result, the crab was slowly thawed, causing the fridge to be dripping in the condensed liquids from the crab, with a lingering stench to boot.

"Eh, Nii-san, you went to Hokkaido? When?"

"Three days ago."

"Why didn't you say anything about that?"

“...Well, it was just decided at the last moment. That idiot Setsuna had a crazy idea of wanting to eat some salmon roe.”

“I remember Setsuna-san is the illustrator in charge of your novel, right?”

“Yeah. It’s that Puriketsu.”

“That shaking...”

Chihiro’s face went beetroot, and asked, “So you went with Setsuna-san?”

“Yep.”

“That’s...”

Chihiro immediately showed an envious look, and stared at the crab.

“Hm...how do I deal with this large crab...it’s already thawed, so it’s best if it can be used for cooking...anyway, why such a large crab? Do you really like crab, Nii-san?”

“I-I don’t really like it that much!”

Itsuki denied with an agitated, reddened face, but calmed down immediately.

“I just bought it because I found it cool. It has claws and shell after all.”.

“Just because it looks cool.”

Chihiro looked dumbfounded, and removed the crab from the fridge.

“It’s heavy...how do I deal with this...is there anything you want, Nii-san?”

“Crab roe.”

“...What about the meat?’

“I’ll leave it to you.”

“...Understood.”

Chihiro let out a little sigh, and laid the crab on the cooking table.

Chihiro, who would normally mutter in a troubled manner, showed a vague smile on the lips. It seemed this supreme ingredient left Chihiro wanting to show off.

After leaving the cooking to the little brother, Itsuki got ready to return to the

desk, and stopped.

“Ah, right.”

“What?”

“And there’s another local produce.”

Itsuki opened the fridge, and took out a black object wrapped in a vacuum pack.

“What’s this?”

“Chiraga”

“Chiraga? ...Kya!”

Chihiro’s face approached the thing, and let out a girlish squeal as he retreated.

Itsuki was holding the Chiraga he bought from Okinawa—pig’s face.

The entire shape of the face was distinct, not just the unique looking snout. On first look, it appeared to be an entire pig’s head. It was terrifying.

“Wh-wh-wh-wh-what is that?”

“Pig’s face.”

“I think I saw it on TV before...some famous produce from Okinawa...”

“Right, I bought it from Okinawa. Rather delicious too.”

Chihiro was dumbfounded.

“When did you go to Okinawa?”

“Just a week ago.”

“Why?”

“Because...the air conditioning malfunctioned, and it’s too cold to be in the room.”

Chihiro looked incredulous.

“Just because it’s cold...you could have returned home. It’s nearby...”

“Ahh...I forgot about that.”

To be honest, Itsuki initially did not forget about evacuating to his old home, but that he chose not to.

"Seriouly..." and while Itsuki played dumb, Chihiro let out a little sigh.

Seeing Chihiro with such a reaction, Itsuki...too knew that such a smart little brother would not have missed out on the fact that he was playing dumb.

However, Chihiro did not pursue the matter further.

"...Anyway, how is this Chiraga to be eaten?"

Chihiro asked as he stared at the nice looking pig face.

"The shop I ate this at had it sliced into thin pieces."

"Speaking of which, I think Okinawa called the pig ears, Mimiga or something. Just think of it as something similar and it'll do, I guess...hm...there's also crab..."

Chihiro gauged the crab on the cooking table and the pig face in Itsuki's hand, giving a grim look as he started to ponder.

"...Crab and pork...hmmm..."

"Well, pork can be kept for a longer time. There's no need to use it today, right?"

"...No, I'll try. Focus on your work, Nii-san."

"Oh, okay."

Itsuki left the pig face with the little brother who appeared to be all fired up, and left the kitchen.

妹

After about an hour, the dish was completed, and the tabletop of the kotatsu

was packed with a scrumptious dinner that was obviously a little too much for just two people. The duo started to tuck in.

There was salad with sliced lettuce, tomatoes, pig skin, and an exorbitant serving of crab legs and pon vinegar.

Deep fried spring rolls and raw spring rolls of crab meat and sliced pig face.

Frozen soup of crab and pig face.

Fried rice made of crab and pig face.

It might be Chihiro's insistence, but every dish had pig face and crab, none of them made without any of those two ingredients, and most importantly, every dish was delicious.

Amongst them, the one with most praise was the deep-fried spring roll. The boiling hot pork oil and Snow crab juice wrapped underneath the crispy skin fused together to form a rich fresh taste that was not only delicious, but also a perfect sense of blissfulness with the thick crab meat and the crispiness of the pig face.

Itsuki exhaled hot air from his nostrils, huff, puff, and enjoyed the spring rolls.

"Th-this is too perfect...a miraculous harmony of the northernmost and southernmost produces...! If I'm to name this, let's see, South...Southern Cros... North...Northern Cross...Southern...Northern...well, I guess 'North-South Spring Roll' is fine."

Itsuki originally intended to come up with a cool, creative dish name akin to that of a cooking manga, but just could not come up with one that read well, and could only compromise.

"You like spring rolls?"

"Yep."

Itsuki nodded honestly, and Chihiro beamed.

"...Oh yeah, you went to Okinawa with Setsuna-san, Nii-san?"

"No, I went to Okinawa with Miyako and Crab Lord."

Pikun, Chihiro's eyebrows twitched.

"Heh...I see...so you went to Okinawa with two girls..."

"...So what?"

"It's nothing. I just find you mature for doing this, Nii-san."

Chihiro's voice had a strange reproaching tone to it, and Itsuki felt a little awkward.

"...It-it's nothing amazing to be going on a holiday, right? I took a flight to Okinawa, and in the blink of an eye...right. Not exactly...a single trip takes three hours, about the same time to go to Granny's in Gifu. Speaking of which, you probably went out with girls too yourself, right?"

"I-I—"

At this moment, the smartphone in Chihiro's pocket rang.

Chihiro fished it out, and touched the screen.

"...Hello?"

"Ah! Chihhii?"

Coming from the phone was a voice of a lively girl.

"Ho-Hold on a moment."

Chihiro hurriedly got up, and hurried to the kitchen.

While Chihiro whispered into the phone "Tch, I guess handsome guys are like this..." Itsuki sighed as he glanced aside at him.

It seemed Chihiro was not dating with anyone, but there was once when Itsuki glanced through his phone contacts, and saw an entire column of girls' names.

Back when Itsuki was in high school, he had nary a single girl in the contact list. It would be said that rather than girls calling him, there were so few times during his school days when he spoke to girls...or rather, not just girls. He hardly spoke with boys. Truth be told, he was alone.

"..."

He recalled that dull, dark high school light, and felt gloomy. While marveling

at the delicious crab and pork, he gorged into the north-south fried rice.

He kept eating, and then Chihiro, done with the phone call, returned.

“Your girlfriend, Chihhii?”

Itsuki teased, and Chihiro blushed.

“Seriously, I said I don’t have a girlfriend.” He said with a huff.

Itsuki did not mind, and continued eating, sharing with Chihiro his trips to the aquarium in Okinawa and having seafood rice in Hokkaido.

Once food was done, Chihiro put the remaining food into the fridge, washed the cutlery and cooking utensils, took the washed clothes out to dry, cleaned up the bathroom and washroom, scrubbed the floor, separated the trash, and left Itsuki’s room.

“See you next time, Nii-san...come back home when you have time.”

“...Oh, okay...when I want to.”

“...”

Chihiro looked a little peeved, and turned away, “Ah, wait.” Itsuki called out.

Itsuki returned to the room, and took out the bag of gifts on the table, handing it over to Chihiro, who was outside the door.

“This is for back home. Awamori and Shiroi Koibito, and a key holder for you.”^[54]

Chihiro received the bag, reached the hand in, and took out the key holder.

There was a cute deformed whale shark dangling on the ring.

“For me?”

“Yeah.”

Chihiro’s face turned red, and he looked up at Itsuki.

“Th-thank you...”

“Yeah.”

“Whale shark. This should be the same strap as yours, Nii-san.”

Chihiro showed an earnest smile on the androgynous face.

And upon seeing the smile that could only be described as adorable, Itsuki's heart skipped a beat for some reason.

Chapter 10

Valentine's Day

It was a week after the North-South Spring Rolls.

This day was the 14th of February—Valentine's Day.

At dusk, the handsome guy author Fuwa Haruto came to Itsuki's room.

"Yo, brought some chocolates for you."

"...Why do I have to accept chocolates from you?"

Itsuki gave a repulsed look as he glanced aside, and Haruto ignored him as he entered through the door by himself, opened the fridge, and put a tote bag filled with bottles of black beers.

"Belgium?"

"No, Japanese."

"Hm...that's rare."

Typically, Haruto would bring foreign beer (mainly Belgium), and Itsuki hardly saw him bring any Japanese beer here.

"This is what they call Valentine's beer. It's a Japanese custom to give chocolates on Valentine's day. Of course, Japan is also the only one that produces Valentine's beer."

"Really."

Itsuki's interest was piqued, and he took one of the bottles, eyeing it. It was the SanktGallen's Imperial Chocolate Stout^[55]

"...There's chocolate inside?"

"Nope. The chocolate taste is made by roasting the malt. In other words, it's Stout. This is the only period with uniquely produced stout...it's nice. Want some?"

"...O-of course."

Itsuki gulped, and Haruto's face showed a teasing smile.

"Hahaha...look at you, greedy guy. You look so thirsty."

"Do-don't be stupid...! When have I ever looked so thirsty..."

"You say that, but you're gripping that thing so tightly."

"...! Ugh, ah whatever, let's just drink!"

"Hey hey, this isn't how you should be begging, right? Look, plead properly."

"Who-who's—"

"...What are you two doing?"

Upon hearing this cold voice, both of them turned around, and found Nayuta standing at the door without them knowing.

"I'm practicing how to attack as a bastard. Such characters seem to be popular with girls."^[56]

Haruto heartily answered, and Itsuki exclaimed, "There's such thing...!" Of course, Itsuki's reaction was for real.

"...I have no interest in the man slut prince trying to get a high on his own. But Itsuki-senpai's reaction was amazing when he was attacked...do you prefer to be dragged along, senpai?"

"Hey, stop with the useless random thoughts, Lord Kani."

Upon seeing Nayuta mutter for real, Itsuki gave a leery look.

Nayuta entered the house, and the trio sat around the kotatsu.

Haruto popped the cap of the chocolate beer, pouring glasses for Itsuki and himself.

The chocolate color fluids and the delightful froth filled the glass, the fragrance lingering.

"So nice. I want to drink."

"Just drink your root beer, alright?"

Itsuki said, and with a scowl, "I will." Nayuta pouted, took out a can of root beer from her bag, and poured it into her own glass.

Root beer looked similar to the chocolate stout, being a black liquid with froth, but it had a unique medicinal smell.

"What is this, some cold patch...!?"

Haruto scowled once he scented upon the stench.

"...You really brought it here." Itsuki noted.

"Yes. I bought an entire carton on Amazon."

On a side note, root beer is a carbonated drink that has a mixture of several herbs, and though very popular in USA, it was rare to buy such a drink in Japan, except for Okinawa. Due to the gassiness and the unique taste, the popularity varies according to the person, and some called it a 'Drinkable Salonpas'^[57]

Itsuki and company did drink A&W on Okinawa, and back then, Miyako's opinion was 'It's like Salonpas and Syrup mixed together', giving up midway through her drink. Itsuki's opinion in turn was 'It's like adding more herbs to Dr. Pepper...I don't really hate it, but I rather drink Dr. Pepper', and finished his drink. As for Nayuta, who was all the more impressed, 'What is this? Why is this so delicious? I finally found something I've been looking for all this while! Let's have another one!', drank 5 cups (A&W provides free flow of root beer), and had a tummyache as a result.

Haruto brought his and Itsuki's glasses, and the chocolate stout before Itsuki, waving a V-sign with his left hand before the bottle, avoiding Itsuki's face as he took a photo. 'Today's Valentine's Day, I'm having chocolate beer with Itsuki-kun (*^_^*) ≡' he posted this along with the photo onto Twitter.

"...Another gay appeal?"

Itsuki looked dumbfounded.

"Everyone's more accepting than I expected. Anyway, I intend to keep up the gay love route until the anime airs...look, I got some happy messages."^[58]

Appearing on the screen of the smartphone was “You two are still so loving!”, “Congratulations!”, “＼(^O^)／”

“...I have no interest in the man slut prince twitter. I’m just wondering if these people will attack when senpai and I get married?”

“They know that we’re just joking around for fun. Should be fine, probably.”

Haruto answered a worried looking Nayuta.

“...Relax. The day you and I get married will never come.”

Itsuki muttered with a nonchalant look, brought the cup up, and took a drink.”

“Oh...?”

Unlike the usual impression of chocolate, there was hardly any sweetness in the stout. An intense bitterness of cocoa spread in the mouth. This unexpected taste left him shocked.

“...This taste is rather unique. I want some sweet stuff as side dishes.”

Haruto too took a gulp, and said,

“Speaking of which, I bought some Royce raw chocolate in Hokkaido. Let’s have that then.”^[59]

Itsuki said that, and got up, but Nayuta stopped him.

“Wai-wait a second, senpai! Why do you have to buy your chocolate at such a moment?”

“...What’s the problem. There’s never enough chocolate.”

Writing novels is a very taxing job on the brain, so it’s very important to replenish the brain with sugars. Also, there’s a need to concentrate, and thus, an empty stomach’s a tough opponent.

Chocolates are foods that can satisfy both the brain and the tummy, so Itsuki’s room was often filled with chocolates.

“So Nayu-chan, you brought chocolates for Itsuki?”

“Of course...and I was wondering when I should bring it out.”

Haruto asked, and Nayuta pouted.

"So Itsuki, just have Nayu-chan's chocolate. I'll have that raw chocolate then."

"...Lord Kani's chocolate...I hope there isn't any strange thing put inside."

Seeing Itsuki gave an anxiety look, Nayuta looked displeased.

"I did buy this from a shop."

Saying that, she fished out two nicely wrapped boxes to Itsuki.

"...One of them is Obligation's chocolate from Mya-san. She bought it along with me."^[60]

"I see."

"...I wanted to make chocolates with all kinds of substances from me, but Mya-san gave me a serious look when she told me to give up, so I decided not to and bought them instead."

"...Good work, Miyako."

Nayuta gave the Godiva Limited Edition Valentine's Chocolate that was packed in a heart-shaped box. Miyako too sent Godiva chocolate slabs, but it was not a limited item.^[61]

Itsuki immediately took a gulp of stout, and had a piece of Nayuta's chocolate. A suitable amount of sweetness spread in the mouth, and the bitterness of the stout that lingered on the tip of the tongue emphasized on the sweetness. However, the taste of stout was not overpowered, but emphasized. As expected, it went well with the chocolate.

Haruto took a photo, uploaded a photo onto twitter going 'Itsuki-kun gave me some Royce's raw chocolate ////', and started to eat the chocolate as he indulged in the stout. The bottle was soon emptied.

The next thing opened was the Valentine's Day limited edition beer Haruto brought along, the sweet vanilla stout. This stout included vanilla essence, was very sweet, and too was very compatible with chocolate.

The trio continued to leisurely play 'Dominion' as they finished the second bottle, and then, they summoned from the fridge something that was of

Belgium produce, similar to Godiva, but slightly sweeter, the I-Gouden Carolus Christmas Beer, and the Winter Koniske. The beer party officially started.

As it was dinner, the gratin and beef stew Chihiro prepared the prior day was taken out to be heated, and shared amongst the trio.

It was left for a day, but the beef remained tender, and the taste was rich.

"This is delicious! Your little brother's way too good at cooking here! This can be sold out there."

Haruto earnestly marveled.

"Huff huff...this is good. As to be expected of my future brother-in-law."

Itsuki just pretended not to hear Nayuta's delusion.

"...Speaking of which, it seemed Chihiro did use the chocolate to spice up the flavor. he did mention how polyphenol can affect the meat."

Surely Chihiro would be able to have lots of chocolate today, Itsuki thought.

The trio kept eating, and suddenly, the doorbell rang.

Itsuki found it a chore, but he still got up to the corridor, peeped through the door, and found the editor Toki Kenjirou standing outside.

"This is bad! It's the editor! Run!"

Itsuki yelled into the room, and Haruto kept drinking beer at will, while Nayuta quickly ducked under the kotatsu.

Itsuki realized that he forgot to lock the door, and prepared to reach for it, but the door was opened silently.

"...Looks like you're having fun here."

Toki said with a stoic look. His face was skinny, dark rings under the lenses of his glasses, the old fiery appearance of his had completely vanished.

"I-is there something...if it's to discuss the new proposal, I'm still not down."

Toki showed a tired smile, and while Itsuki's face was frozen in fear, the former let out a sigh.

"...I don't want to talk about work for today."

“...Really? What brings you here today then?”

“I’m here to deliver Valentine’s Chocolate. I saw that Fuwa-sensei is together with you on Twitter, so I brought his along as well.”

“Ohh! I’ve been waiting!”

Itsuki showed a happy face, as though a different personality had shown through.

“...Sorry to disturb you.” Toki said, and entered the room.

“Good work today.”

Haruto heartily greeted.

“Good work today...I know you’re here, Kani-sensei, I saw your shoes on the corridor.”

“You’re mistaken. I’m Itsuki-senpai’s wife, Hashima Kaniko. Thank you for taking care of my husband all this while.”

Nayuta, who hid herself under the kotatsu, slowly climbed out, and calmly stated this.

Toki looked dumbfounded.

“I’m not going to bother you, Kani-sensei. Your books aren’t under my charge.”

“As to be expected of you, Toki-sama, always so understanding! Well, come have some.”

Nayuta got gleeful, poured some beer into the glass Haruto just finished, and handed it over to Toki.

“...I’ll have this then.”

Toki immediately gulped down the beer as though he was drinking juice.

“Fuah!”

“...That beer’s rather expensive...”

Haruto grumbled, looking somewhat displeased, but Toki did not listen.

“Here’s the chocolate. And this is for you, Haruto-sensei.”

Toki handed the bags to Itsuki and Haruto. Itsuki's one was exceptionally big, and really heavy.

"Thank you very much."

"Kukuku...my followers have provided their offerings."

The two of them took out chocolates, and laid them onto the table. The chocolates Haruto received totaled to about ten, while the number Itsuki received was way too much to be displayed on the tabletop.

"Fuhahaha, you see you Haruto!? This is my ability! Now that I'm so popular, I won't have difficulty in going out there and saving the world kukukuk, fuauhahahahahagakackack!!"

While Itsuki heartily laughed and choked on his saliva, Haruto gave a hearty smile, but it was obvious that he was a little peeved.

"...To be exact, those chocolates aren't 'for you', but 'for the characters in your works'."

"Right. There's no way Itsuki-senpai can be popular. The only one on this world who truly loves senpai is me."

"Hahahahaha say all you want, pitiful losers! Say it, what are you feeling now!? You lost in the number of chocolates received to me, Ikemen^[62] prince, what are your thoughts now?"

"Ugh..." That arrogance from Itsuki left Haruto's face numb and twitching.

Every year, during Valentine's, the editorial branch would receive lots of chocolates and sweets from the readers. Of them, few are sent to the authors themselves; most were sent to the characters appearing in the works.

Surprisingly, in terms of sales volumes, Nayuta and Haruto's works were far superior, but there was an astounding number of chocolates sent to the editorial branch, specified to the characters Itsuki penned.

Amongst the readers of Fuwa Haruto's work 'Keikai no Chevalier', more than 95% were males, and naturally, there were few who would send chocolates.

Kani Nayuta's work 'Scenery' was more of a group drama, mainly depicting a realistic bunch of boys and girls with many flaws. The appearing characters

often show romance, and as the author's a female, there were lots of female readers. Due to the style of the work however, it was unlikely that the readers would send chocolates to the characters.

In contrast, Hashima Itsuki's work had sicon tendencies that went overboard, there were all kinds of surreal, cool male characters, including the protagonist showing up, so there was quite a major female reader base.

The second work in particular, 'Genesis Star of the New World' was during the period when Itsuki was most obedient to the editor,, and the sicon tendencies were kept relatively in check. Also, there were beautiful illustrations of beautiful girls, asses, and even cool guys, all provided by the super god Puriketsu. Even though the work had long ended, there were a lot of loyal, diehard fans who loved the story.

For Itsuki, who would easily have an inferiority complex when compared to the handsome dude Haruto and the perfect superman Chihiro, the one day he would most enjoy was—Valentine's Day.

"Kukuku. Enough talk. Let's taste the offerings of my loyal followers."

But unlike the crude tone, Itsuki carefully opened the packaging, and tasted each chocolate carefully. He looked happier than he did tasting Nayuta and Miyako's premium chocolate, and Nayuta looked displeased as she said this, puffing her cheeks.

妹

And so, Toki seemed to have completely forgotten that he said 'just one glass', and kept drinking until he got drunk, harassing not only Itsuki, but Haruto and Nyuta.

"Fuwa-sensee, why are you aple to deliver your dafts so puntually~ so ablazing!"

"Ah, ahh, yeah...you're overcomplimenting me..."

"I bope the other shitty auhors and shitty illustrabors can learn from sensee~!"

"No, calling them shitty is..."

"Kani-sensei~!"

"Y-yes."

"Please work seriousllly~! Please keeep to the dedline~! You are ourr bestselling autor! That Puriketsu too. Why are the craters always increasingly not serrious with theirr work the more popular they arreeeeee~!"

"...Anyway, let's leave this topic for another time. We'll settle this appropriate, and work hard to see if there's any possibilities of working hard."

Haruto and Nayuta simply rattled on, obviously as their moods were ruined.

But Toki kept latching onto them, and they had enough.

"Right, Itsuki, we'll be going back then..."

"...Senpai, do your best here."

"Wa-wait a sec! You two are just going to leave me like this!?"

The duo returned home, and Toki vented all his vexations upon Itsuki alone.

A week back, Toki learned that Puriketsu, or Ena Setsuna went to Hokkaido, rushed all the way to Hokkaido with a laptop and pentab in hand, caught the latter at the Snow Festival, and locked him in the Sapporo hotel. After supervising him and making sure the illustrations were done, Toki finally returned to Tokyo this morning, and looked to be completely worn out, physically and mentally.

"I finally made it to Hokkaido, but I stayed in the hotel the entire time. I didn't get to eat anything good, and didn't have time to go visit the local tourist attractions...! Uuu...damn it..."

"...Really? That's rather sad...anyway, there's still some Royce raw chocolate.

Want some?"

"...Oh...thanks...good...chocolate's goood..."

Toki kept crying as he ate the chocolate, tumbled back, and fell asleep until the next morning.

The next day, Toki went to work at the publisher's office while hungover, but it was commonplace for editors, so his superior did not tell him off.

羽島伊月

【はしま・いづき】

年齢：20歳
妹モノばかりを書いている小説家。屁理屈が達者なひねくれ者だが根本的には素直。
作品：『黙示録ノ妹（単巻完結）』『新世界の創妹記全8巻』『かみいも！（単巻完結）』『深い暗闇も祓う光と（単巻完結）』『妹法大戦（～4巻）』『やはり俺の妹がこんなに可愛いのは間違っているだろうか（単巻完結）』『小野の妹（単巻完結）』『妹のすべて（～3巻）』



パラメータ

才能

生活力

速度

コミュ力

分析力



未だ見ぬ究極の妹を創造すべく奮闘する、現代のピグマリオン

Chapter 11

Valentine's EX (For Fuwa Haruto with a Tsundere Little Sister)

On February 14th, while the sky was about to darken.

Haruto escaped from the drunk Toki Kenjirou, left Itsuki's room, and returned home, scenting upon a sweet smell.

It was the same smell he came upon in Itsuki's apartment—the scent of chocolate.

“...?”

Haruto felt intrigued, went over to the kitchen, and found his little sister busy making something.

“Fufu. Preparations are complete! Erm, now then, time to add cocoa powder —”

“...What are you doing?”

“Hya!?”

Haruto called out, and his little sister turned around sheepishly.

The apron she was decked in was covered in black substance, dirty all over, and even her face was the same.

“Wh-wh-wh-wh-why did you come back at this time! You stupid brother!”

While his little sister was blushing and stammering,

“Ahh!? What's that got to do with me coming back early?”

“Of course there is, you idiot! Aren't you out drinking at your friend's place? Don't you come back late every time you go out drinking?”

"You're noisy...is me coming back early stopping you from doing something?"

"Ah? Of course not. I just find you to be an eyesore at home."

"Really? Then I'll be going around looking for an apartment to move to."

Haruto really thought so as he said this, and his little sister clearly got more agitated.

"Huh? Of course that won't do, you idiot! You can't possibly survive alone!"

"I can live well, okay?"

"Anyway, no means no! And if you're going to move out, who's going to write my assignments and be my gofer to the convenience store!"

"Leaving aside going to the convenience store, you should be doing your own homework..."

Through past experiences, Haruto knew that there would not be a conclusion if he continued to argue about moving out. Thus, he decided to have a change in topic.

His vision drifted towards the cooking table behind his little sister. There were several small round rolled bits of chocolates, a bowl with bits of melted chocolate sticking onto it, and a bag of cocoa powder.

"...You're making obligatory chocolates?"

"Y-yeah. So?"

"Not that you can't...but why now? It's Valentine's Day today."

And it was almost night. It was already a day too late to be making chocolates.

"I-it's not like I want to give this chocolate on Valentine's! I just saw some TV specials and my friends giving chocolates, so I thought of making chocolates myself."

"Oh."

It might be too much of a hassle to make chocolate, but Haruto could understand the urge to eat after seeing the chocolates others have.

"...Right. I hope you can make some delicious chocolate. Well, it's hard to fail in making obligatory chocolates."

"Th-that goes without saying, right!? How can I possibly fail at making it over and over again! Of course I'll make it super good!"

And then, the little sister lowered her head slightly.

"On-once I'm done, I can share some of it with you, Onii."

"Ah~ I don't want it. I got mine."

Haruto raised the paper bag of chocolates he received in Itsuki's apartment, and his little sister widened her eyes, clearly looking rattled.

"W-who gave them to you?"

"My readers. They're sent to the editorial branch, specified for me."

Haruto noted gleefully, and his sister bared her fangs, pouting unhappily.

"M-my chocolate's way better!"

She growled, grabbed some cocoa powder, and messily scattered it all over the chocolates.

"H-hey—ahm!"

The little sister grabbed one, and stuffed it into the mouth of the confused Haruto. Left with no choice, Haruto could only lick it, and gnash it with his mouth.

"How about that!"

"...Just normal, I guess."

Haruto answered his glaring little sister, and the latter looked dejected, slamming her apron onto the floor.

"Stupid brother. You big stupid. Now I don't want to eat chocolate because of you. Take responsibility and eat them all."

"What!"

"You hear me!? Eat them all!"

After making such an unreasonable demand, the little sister stormed out of

the kitchen without giving Haruto any chance to grumble.

Haruto looked vexed as he stared at the chocolate dumped onto the chopping board, and reluctantly popped one into his mouth. As expected, the taste was erratic.

There were at least ten obligatory chocolates that had cocoa powder scattered over them. Unfortunately, it seemed the chocolates sent by the fans would have to wait starting tomorrow.

As he quietly ate the chocolates, Haruto again thought, —As expected, little sisters aren't a good thing.

Chapter 12

About this author, Kani Nayuta.

“The reason why novels are created and read, is because it is a form of protest to life, which can only be lived once’. This quote came from Kitamura Kaoru, but one aspect of Kani Nayuta’s ‘Scenery’ series is basically, ‘for the author to experience a different life’, and that nobody can follow this. The setting of this series is in modern Japan, and though somewhat surreal, there is nothing too outstanding in the setting. There are also few drastic fluctuations in mood of the story, none of the characters in the story have the heroic characteristics every light novel reader likes, and they are all characters with obvious flaws. However, readers unwittingly view every character as ‘another me’, and put themselves into the shoes. They are immersed in the world of the work, as though a spell had been casted upon them. Besides this powerful, vivid presentation, the work is filled with lots of unique descriptions called ‘Kani vocabulary’. It is a unanimous fact that it enhanced the immersion experience of the readers, but what causes the readers to be so fanatical is not simply the power of the exposition. The image of the characters, the positioning, relationships, settings, writing, and so on forms a miraculous balance that blends all the elements together, crafting a magic that cannot be analyzed. Others tried analysis the elements of ‘Scenery’ and tried to reconstruct it, but it is unlikely for anyone to replicate the same magic again. The ‘Scenery’ series is a rare topseller in recent years, but there are no plans to adapt it into a different medium, like manga and anime, or even a live-action, probably because of this reason. It might not be hyperbole to say that reading the ‘Scenery’ series is basically experiencing a different life. Also, that is an experience that can only be gained by reading the novels penned by Kani Nayuta.”

Written by: Ikeda.

“Can’t use this one.”

The chief editor read Ikeda’s draft, and immediately rejected it.

It’s the editorial branch of the weekly magazine ‘Leonardo’.

Ikeda’s a rookie columnist with almost a year of experience, and was in charge of introducing novels.

“...I can’t?”

And he gave the chief editor a disappointed look.

“Well, it’s not like I can’t understand what you’re trying to get at.”

“Really?”

“...But this entire column is too subjective. Basically, you’ve been praising how amazing this novel is, like magic. And the reason why there hasn’t been a cross-media work is just your own guess...well, it’s not like I don’t understand what you’re trying to get at.”

The chief editor repeated those words again.

“So I’m rejecting this one. The only readers who can roughly understand what you’re trying to get at are basically those that read the ‘Scenery’ series. This column is supposed to be for introducing works. You have to write down the parts that are amazing charming, and make sure those who never read it can understand. I know this request is very difficult though.”

“Yeah, it really is...”

Ikeda lowered his head dejectedly, got ready to return to his seat, and turned to face the chief editor.

“...Oh yeah, you think the ‘Scenery’ series can be adapted into a different medium, chief?”

“There’s still no details to the plan now. There will be many offers though, for sure.”

“I guess.”

“...Well, I do agree that it’s hard to replicate the atmosphere in the book elsewhere. Perhaps this is the reason why it hasn’t been adapted.”

妹

It all went back to when the second volume of the ‘Scenery’ series was released into the market.

Kani Nayuta learned from her editor-in-charge Yamagata that there were many offers to adapt the work into different mediums.

There were numerous offers to adapt it into manga, anime, anime movies, live action dramas or live action movies. Included amongst them were famous animator studios known for producing bestselling works, and several major award-winning movie directors.

“Looking from the publisher’s perspective, it’s best if you can have it adapted into something else.”

“Nn~ but if I do it, I’ll get really busy, right?”

Nayuta noted casually, asking Yamagata with a void gaze.

“Of course...you need to check the names and script, and you have a lot more interviews to attend.”

“Then I don’t want to.”

“Wa—that’s too fast! It’s a great chance to promote your work.”

Yamagata tried to coax Nayuta, but the latter hid her blushing face, clearly bashful.

“But...if I get busy, the time I can get to meet Itsuki-senpai will be less, right?”

After that, for an hour or so, Yamagata tried to persuade Nayuta, but the latter just would not agree, and he could only give up. He could tell that the more he tried to persuade, the more Nayuta was peeved, and if he kept persuading her, her relationship with the publisher would be fractured beyond repair. Also, Yamagata himself too felt that other media forms would be unable to replicate the charm of 'Scenery'.

—But even so, it was a pity.

Nayuta declared that she was going to look for Itsuki, and skipped out of the editorial branch. Yamagata watched her leave, and wondered,

It was the perfect chance to raise the prestige of the work and Nayuta, but the latter rejected it flatly as she did not want to decrease the amount of time she would spend with the boy she liked. That Hashima Itsuki—if not that that perverted gone case of a siscon author...but despite this, and in the end, without Itsuki, it was impossible for Nayuta to become an author.

Ahh, why did the heavens give such a coveted talent to such a lovestruck girl? Fate really has a cruel sense of humor. With Nayuta-like talent, surely he would create a revolution in the world of literature...so Yamagata, once an aspiring author, lamented.

Whenever he had such a thought, the one remedy would be to read Kani Nayuta's works.

After experiencing a different life through other means, through the eyes of a third person who was bothered with insignificant burdens and troubles, Yamagata would recover and face the reality that belonged to him again.

Chapter 13

Go to hell, tax reporting

Authors are basically considered self-employed.

All self-employed persons are to report their income and expenditures between January 1st and December 31st, affirm the total earnings. This is tax reporting.

The period of tax reporting would be in the following year, February 16th to March 15th, lasting for a year. Once this period expires, it's possible to report taxes, but there would be more money taxed.

Taking authors as example, once a book gets released and the publisher pays the fees, the royalties that was pre-taxed beforehand would be counted as earnings. (Anything under one million yen is taxed at 10%, while the rest that exceeds one million is taxed at 20%). Thus, when taxing reporting accurately, most authors would get tax rebates, unless they are bestselling authors.

Thus, no matter how troublesome it was, every author had to report their taxes so as to salvage their earnings.

However, it was really a massive job to sort out the earnings over an entire year and make a report.

It's possible to do so with hard work and not leave to others, but the most time-saving and reliable manner for tax-related matters would be to look for a tax expert.

This tax expert—would be a tax manager.

妹

On a certain day in late February, a lady came to Hashima Itsuki's apartment.

She had a young—probably childish looking appearance. An estimate of her age, at best, would be around 15 years old.

She was a pretty girl with blond hair, white skin and emerald eyes, wearing a loose red Lolita dress.

Her appearance gave an adorable vibe, but her eyes were sharp, and her lips showed a cruel smile.

Ono Ashley, age unknown.

Profession,

"Tax Manager Ono. Are you the client Hashima Itsuki?"

"Ahh...y-yeah. Please take care of me..."

Ashley spoke with an uppity tone, sizing up Itsuki while the latter stood on the corridor while looking as though she was weighing something; that left Itsuki really tense.

Having been an author for three years, this was the fourth time Itsuki had to report his tax. However, this year was the first time he hired a tax manager.

His first tax reporting occurred soon after he debuted, and back then, he only wrote one volume during the fiscal year, hardly had the habit of keeping his receipts, and thus had nothing much to write for his tax reports.

For the second and third time, Itsuki went to the internet to research, and filed his own reports, but over two consecutive years, he found mistakes in his calculations, and ended up having to file them again.

He worked so hard to file his taxes, yet the rebates he got was so pitifully little, and he lashed out, "I don't want to do this every year! I'll earn a lot more using that time to write my reports!" Thus, he had Haruto introduce a tax

manager for him, and found Ono Ashley^[63].

"Haruto, you know of any good tax manager?"

"...Good tax manager, as in, 'amazing tax manager'??"

"? What else do I mean then?"

"...No. If you want a great tax manager, I do have a suitable choice of person. Undoubtedly talented, and very reliable...it seems this person is rather impressed by your work, so I feel."

That was the conversation Itsuki had with Haruto. While there was some obvious intent in Haruto's words, Itsuki did not heed that.

Amongst self-employed people, authors were a unique and rare breed. Not all tax managers may understand the situations authors face.

But Ono Ashley was a tax manager adept at handling creative work, so it appeared that she was known as the premier person in the publishing world.

"Hmm....for a young man like you staying by yourself, your house is rather clean."

Ashley sat at the raised high-powered office chair Itsuki normally worked at in a matter of fact manner, and looked around the room as she commented.

"Ahh, thanks for the compliments..."

Itsuki was lost as to where he should be sitting, and chimed in with confusion.

"Now then, do you mind showing me your receipts?"

"...Ahh, okay."

Itsuki had sorted out the publishing royalties and receipts from the publisher, the credit card details and invoices and other information according to month, and stored them in a clear file.

He handed the file over.

"...Hmm, so you sorted out the receipts according to month? That's a lot more orderly than I expected."

For some reason, Ashley showed a bored look as she noted this.

As to why they were sorted out so neatly, it was because of the little brother Chihiro always sorting them out, but Itsuki did not comment on that.

"Heh...you earn quite a fair bit."

Ashley commented as she stared at the receipts in the file,

"...Sorta, thanks to everyone."

And Itsuki, not knowing where to sit, could only stand up as he answered.

"No problems, you can find someplace else to sit."

"...Ah, okay."

Itsuki then sat down with mixed, inexplicable emotions.

"...Oh...so you do have records of your past tax filings...hmm...you're an author, but you have quite the stable income...even if I do sort this based on average taxation, there won't be much effect, if I'm to list this as a corporation however, the figures won't match up..."

Ashley muttered with a strangely delighted look, and Itsuki watched her worriedly.

"Oh yes. Is this apartment your official residence?" Ashley asked this sudden question.

"No, it's back home."

As his old home was within Tokyo city itself, Itsuki did not specify a change in residence when he moved into this apartment."

"Is it nearby?"

"...About twenty minutes by car."

"Yes, that great. This room is considered your workplace, right? In that case, about 90% of your rent can be counted as expense."

"Report 90% of my rent as tax...?"

"You rented this room just for work, and typically head home at night to sleep. This is usually the 'office' you work at, right?"

Ashley determined, and Itsuki was left dumbfounded.

"No, I stay in this apartment, usually...look, there's a bed."

"The bed's just for you to rest."

Ashley emphasized, not allowing any buts, and Itsuki could only give up on insisting.

"...I use the bed for rest. Normally, I'll head home to sleep."

"Right." Ashley nodded, and then,

"Did you buy any pricey items last year? Like a car or something?"

"...I didn't buy one. I bought this chair two years ago...ah, I remember I bought this laptop last year."

"You could have just bought a luxury foreign car."

"You got to be joking...or rather, I don't have a license."

While Itsuki let out a grimace, "Just kidding." Ashley gave a little chuckle.

"However, I do think you can splurge a little more. Compared to other self-employed people, novelists don't really need much capital. You know this, don't you?"

"...Well, yeah."

Other self-employed people will need goods before they could profit—like for example, a butcher, would need to purchase meat from a supplier. There are also regular expenditures like overheads, freezer installation and maintenance, and staff salaries.

For a mangaka, drawing materials pens, ink and draft papers are necessary materials, and even digital artists will require lots of expenditure to purchase a scanner and tablet, an image editing software, and a hi-specs computer. The largest expenditure however would come in the form of hiring assistants.

In contrast, a novelist simply needed a computer. All they needed to do was to type, so even a cheap old generation PC would fit the bill as long as it remained functional. A computer could last several years. Basically, there's no need to hire an assistant or a manager, and thus, there's no labor costs incurred.

On the ‘**bare minimum** expenses required for the job’ aspect, it’s rare to see a job with such little barrier to entry like a novelist.

“How much you can add can be determined as necessary expenditure—this is the critical difference as to whether a tax manager is proficient. Of course, you have calculated all your book expenses, right?”

“Yeah.” Itsuki nodded.

The initial investment into novels is very little.

However, (most of the time) it did not mean that one could easily write a book^[64].

Simply put, creative writing is about straining out the things inside the head, so naturally, there had to be an output (most of the time).

It might be possible for one to write one or two books by sorting all the experiences gained in one’s past. However, this alone would not be enough to maintain a writing standard capable to being a publishing good. (most of the time)

To have an output, one must have an input. (most of the time) If one wants to write a certain historical figure, there’s a need to check on relevant information; If it’s to debut a certain specialized technique in the work, one will have to visit the expert; if there’s a need to set the story at a certain place, there’s a need to head there to obtain materials and so. This input, simply put, is the work to obtain the necessary information.

Such aforementioned examples were undoubtedly ‘necessary expenses required to create a product’, but while some expenses were not directly used on the product, they will still be deemed as necessary expenses.

Taking a novelist as example, basically, all novels are deemed as ‘research material’.

To write, one has to browse through all kinds of novels. No matter the actual effects, this would be something most people could understand and agree it. If it was a book other than a novel—like manga and magazines, specialized books (that have nothing to do with the work), anything can basically be deemed as material.

Entertainment forms other than books are hard to determine though.

Like for example, music CDs, blu-ray DVDs, movies, plastic models, figurines, travel expenses that had nothing to do with the work...

When the tax department question “How is this used on work?”, if the author’s able to clearly specify an explanation, it will undoubtedly be deemed as expense. If the purpose remained unclear however, or if it’s something bought out of personal interest, how would it be deemed as?

“Other than your books, how did you sort them out?”

“I just reported those stuffs I bought as materials as ‘materials fees’.”

“Really? How obedient.” Ashley smirked.

“...I love corrupting such obedient kids.”

“Eh? What did you just...”

“It’s nothing.” Ashley shook her head, and stood up from the chair.

Then, she slowly walked towards the cabinet with the figurines and plastic models.

“I have researched on your work before.”

She stared at the figurines as she commented,

“Do you like little sisters?”

“I love them.”

“Hmm.”

Ashley ignored the fact that Itsuki brazenly admitted his fetish, and pointed at a figure.

“I think I saw her before.”

“She’s the main heroine of Ore no Imouto ga Konnani Kawaii Wake ga Nai, the little sister of the protagonist, Kousaka Kirino-sama. If you’re able to recognize her, I guess Kirino-sama is really god-like...”

“And what about the two little girls wearing cat ears and in swimsuits?”

“They’re the main heroines of ‘Boku wa Tomodachi ga Sukunai’, Hasegawa

Kobato-sama, and Takayama Maria-sama.”

“...I did remember seeing a movie synopsis, but are the heroines such young girls...? Well, that’s not important...and this busty girl here?”

“First heroine of ‘Sword Art Online’, the protagonist’s little sister, Kirigawa Suguha-sama.”

“I do often interact with people in the publishing world, so I have heard of this Sword Art whatever work. It’s about the protagonist being trapped in a game world or something, right? Did this girl show up?”

“This is her actual self in the real world, not inside the game.”

“Oh...so the actual heroine’s a busty girl.”

“Right.”

Unfortunately, there was no one who could jump out and retort, “Like hell that’s right! That SAO main heroine’s a different girl!”

“...And this girl wearing a uniform?”

“She’s the main heroine in ‘K-On!', the little sister, Hirasawa U-i-sama.”

“This work’s very famous, so I do know about the main heroines in one, two works or so...and her?”

“Main heroine in ‘Mobile Suit Gundam ZZ’, the protagonist’s little sister Elpie Ple-sama.”

“So this gundam that looks like a fly is a little sister too?”

Ashley pointed at a red gunpla and a black gunpla placed by the side.

“That’s Ple-sama’s and her little sister Ple Two’s unit, the Qubeley Mk-II. That’s not called a gundam, it’s a mobile suit.”

“Aren’t all anime robots called gundam anyway? What’s the problem... anyway, it seems all the figurines you have here are related to little sisters, right?”

Ashley seemed bored of asking, and turned to question Itsuki, who nodded, “Hmm. Then I suppose I can report all these as research materials.”

“No!”

Itsuki shrieked in protest, and Ashley frowned.

“...Why can’t I?”

“Plastic models aside, these girls aren’t research materials! I just bought them because I dote on them! I don’t want to just classify them cruelly as ‘research material’!”

“...They can be reported as such, right?”

“N-no...!”

With those blue eyes^[65] staring right at him, Itsuki shook his head timidly.

“Don’t you want to try to reduce your taxes as much as possible?”

“Of course...but I can’t belittle these little sisters!”

“Report these figurines as materials, and the money you get back is enough for you to buy new little sister figurines.”

“!”

Itsuki widened his eyes, ostensibly struck by lightning.

“...These figurines are used in the work. They’re proper ‘research materials’. I’ll leave them to you.”

“Fufufu...leave them to me.”

Ashley nodded in satisfaction.

And then, she turned her eyes upon the cabinet with the anime blue ray DVDs and gaming software.

“You bought a lot of girls. What kind of game is ‘this little sister who loves her older brother always wears her older brother’s underwear on her head while itching the ditch’?”

“.....It’s a game about a little sister who loves her older brother always wears her older brother’s underwear on her head while itching the ditch.”

Itsuki’s face was completely beetroot, but he did his best to remain calm, and flatly answered Ashley, who was giving a sadistic look.

"So what's this 'No, we're siblings! How can we do this! *a pretty little sister wife trapped in a forbidden relationship and unable to stop herself*' game?"

"It's a game about a pretty little sister wife trapped in a forbidden relationship and unable to stop herself."

"So, what's a little sister wife?"

"The little sister is the wife."

"Such a complicated concept...ah, 'counterattack of the older brother *a year passed since this little sister was by an anteater*', what is this?"

"It's a shitty game. No little sister showed up."

Itsuki was completely peeved, and answered in annoyance.

"Isn't it written that she was killed by an anteater? What's about this 'Pakoimo'?"

"A rhythm game played with a little sister. The ending is so moving, it brings me to tears."

"I'm the little sister, it's not strange for me to be eating my older brother's shit, right?'...isn't this weird?"

"It's because it's weird that it's great."

"...I'm rather impressed that you're able to say this so boldly."

After checking through everything, Ashley returned to her seat, and started checking the invoices on the credit card. Itsuki knelt on the floor, waiting for the result.

"Hmm...it appears have you have bought a lot of stuff on Amazon. I shall settle the reconciliation work at the office...these 400 Yen and 600 Yen transactions are all on electronic books?"

"Yeah. The smaller transactions should all be electronic books."

"Did you print the receipts?"

"Eh? No..."

"I guessed so...they probably wouldn't check the transactions to such a detail,"

but soon after, there might be a need to use them, so prepare yourself.”

“...Yes.”

“And...you do make payments to the iTunes shop from time to time. For music?”

“! So-something like that.”

Itsuki stammered for some strange reason, and Ashley noticed it, for she interrogated, “...You spent almost ten thousand yen. You don’t have to spend that much on albums, right?”

“...Other than music, I bought **a few magic stones.**”

Itsuki sheepishly looked away.



“Magic stones?”

“A paid item needed to pull the gacha of a social game.”

“Ahh...I do remember a few of my authors clients playing such games.”

This social network game, to define it distinctively, would take forever. At this point, the definition would be ‘a game that can be played on smartphones or traditional phones’.

Compared to video games, most of such games could be played through spare time, and the system is simple.

Most of such social games have a system called ‘gacha’ that is similar to the lottery that allows gamers to obtain cards, items, characters and so on. Such games typically earn through sales of the special items needed to roll the gacha (like ‘magic stones’, ‘spirit stones’, ‘soul gems’, and so on, and the names differed from game to game)

“So, what kind of game are you playing?”

“...Imoregi’...‘Little Sister Legion’.”

“I can roughly guess what kind of game it is just from hearing the title.”

“...It’s probably what you think.”

This ‘Little Sister Legion’ is a social game designed for the smartphone, and as the name implied, many little sisters appeared. It’s possible to draw little sisters from the gacha, but amongst them, there are rare, overly valuable little sisters. To draw them will require not only luck, but lots of magic stones.

The system’s very simple. One had to wonder if such a thing could be considered a ‘game’, and there was hardly any plot. There were lots of little sisters, but the settings and lines given to every little sister was very weak.

...Itsuki himself understood very well that this game was a scam.

Itsuki knew that playing other social games, like ‘Dragon Puzzle’ or ‘Chain Chronicle’ of recent years, and many other games no inferior to homeport games would earn him much more joy.

Though he knew this—

“...You invested quite a bit on this game.”

“...Yeah, at this point, there’s no turning back.”

Itsuki gave a blank look as he answered Ashley, who kept checking the transactions.

When he first played this game, Itsuki spent XXX thousands of yen just to get the little sister he liked. At this point, that money would be wasted if he chose not to play. Thus, even though he wanted to quit, he could not.

“...Ca-can magic stones be considered as expense?”

Itsuki looked over at Ashley with a hopeful look.

“Is this game used in your work?”

“...”

Itsuki gave a serious thought about it for several seconds.

“...I can conclude that it’s not used on my work at all.”

And he answered with a pained look.

“...There’s no plot in this game, to say. There’s a lot of little sisters appearing, but every character only has some short lines and sketchy settings, so it’s hard to have strong feelings for them...these things aren’t little sisters...just .jpeg files with the labels ‘little sisters’ on them...”

Itsuki trembled as he clenched his fists, and Ashley asked with a frigid tone, “Really? Then try using it.”

“Even if you ask me, how am I supposed to use this?”

“What’s your next book going to be?”

“...? Fifth volume of ‘Little Sister Magic War’.”^[66]

Itsuki answered with some trepidation, and Ashley pondered.

“...That novel’s currently at the point where the protagonist is trapped by enemy forces and caught in a critical juncture, right?”

“!? You read my book?”^[67]

“I read all the books of my clients that were released last year. I started

reading this one from the third volume, so I'm not too sure about the details."

Ashley nonchalantly commented.

"Leaving that aside, the important point is how do I report magic stones as expenses. Just let the protagonist in despair say some things like, 'Uu, looks like there's very little chance of surviving. About the same as getting a rare character in the gacha of a social game...'"

"W-wait a moment!"

Itsuki panicked.

"The protagonist of the Little Sister Magic War is a cruel black knight who abandons everything to fight in the world of darkness to protect his one and only little sister...!" "If he has a little sister fetish, that's better. The lines can be refined, 'feels like I just drew a rare little sister in the Little Sister Legion gacha'. That'll make it perfect."

"That'll ruin his image!! He's a black knight fighting in the world of darkness, okay!"

"So, a cruel black knight fighting in the world of darkness, what has that got to do with playing a social game?"

"Of course there is...! It's a matter of life and death, and you use the metaphor of a social game gacha system? Doesn't that imply that he's a player who's completely sucked into whaling?"

"I think this cold hearted black knight having such an unexpected side is fine."

"...It's true that it's common to have a cold-hearted character show an unexpected side to create the joy of gap moe...uu..."

Itsuki pondered over this for quite a while.

"I-I guess not! A protagonist who spends lots of money on social gaming doesn't have any charisma no matter how I look at this!"

"In that case, it's fine to have someone other than the protagonist say this, no? For example, doesn't the protagonist have a sworn enemy. Have him fight the protagonist, and say something like 'hmph...the only times I can feel my blood boiling, are when I'm fighting you or playing social games'. How about

that?"

"That'll just mean that it's the rival and not the protagonist! There's way too little depth for anyone who says such things! That means that the protagonist who's cornered by such a guy will be even more cornered!"

"You really have a lot of demands...in that case, anything goes. Just make sure the social game in mentioned in your work."

"I can't! End of the day, 'Little Sister Magic War' is a fantasy! Won't the setting collapse once I mention a social game?"

"So what if the world setting is a little ruined?"

"That's fine for you too!?"

"...Which is more important, the completion of the work or tax exemptions?"

"Of course it's the work completion!"

"Goodness...and that's why you're an author."

Yare yare^[68], Ashley shrugged "Ugh, why did you make it look like my fault...."

"Guess I have no choice then. I'll just come up with a random reason for the expenses on the social game."

"If you could, couldn't you have done that right from the beginning!?" Itsuki screamed instinctively.

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After that, Ashley did some detailed questioning into the credit card and the invoices, loudly read out what Itsuki bought and downloaded from the internet, and finally went back.

“...I’m tired.”

Itsuki collapsed onto the kotatsu, groaning.

To be honest, he felt more taxed than he did filing his own taxes. On this day, he had no motivation to do anything else.

—I’ll never hire this tax manager again.

Itsuki swore in his heart.

However—

Three days later, Itsuki received an email from Ashley, was notified on the total amount of rebate, and widened his eyes in shock. It was almost three times the amount he got back the previous year.

“Undoubtedly talented, and very reliable.”

At that moment, he realized that Haruto was telling the truth, and the reason as to why there seemed to be a different meaning behind those words.

She was very talented and reliable...but Ono Ashley’s a super sadist.

...A super sadist she was...but very reliable in her work.

If she took up the case of an author, it seemed she would read the work, investigate everything thoroughly, including what games were bought, and it seemed it wasn’t simply because she enjoyed bullying others...so he thought. That would be for the best.

“...Ku...!”

—Then, I shall rely on you from now on.

After much hesitation, Itsuki wrote this last at the end of the email reply, and clicked on the send button.

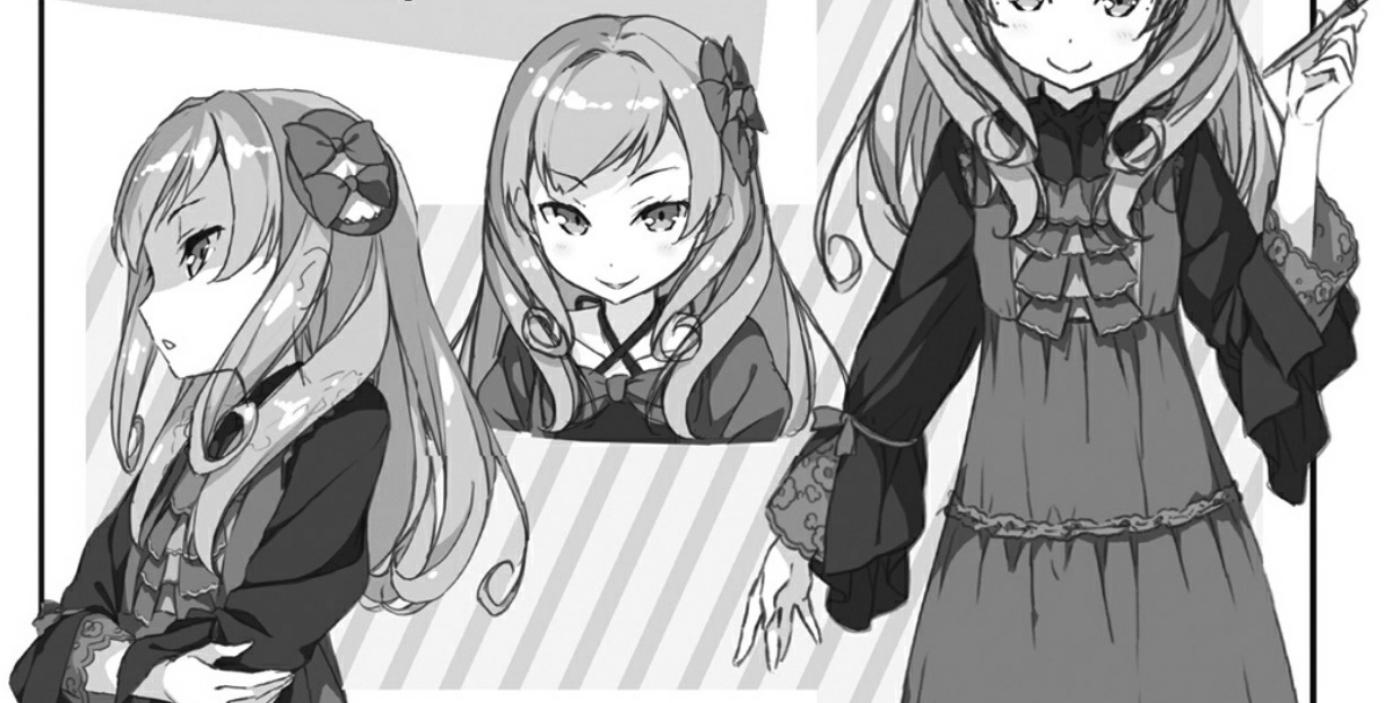
Once he gets his tax rebates, he would use that to buy little sister eroges and figurines.

大野アシュリー

【おおの・あしゅりー】

年齢不詳

出版関係に強いことで知られる税理士。
非常に有能だがドS。



バラメータ

鬼畜度

穢度

仕事の早さ

面倒見

丁寧さ

頼れるけど頼りたくない
鬼畜税金セーバー

Chapter 14

Chronica Chronicle 1

“...I want to play a TRPG.”

On a certain night,

Haruto, cooped in the kotatsu of Itsuki’s apartment, was flipping through the ‘Grand Crest Replay’ when he suddenly mentioned this. [\[69\]](#)

“TRPG?” Itsuki, engrossed in his draft at the table, asked,

“Itsuki, you do know what a TRPG is, right?”

“I do, but I never played one.”

TRPG—or Tabletop Role Playing Game is an interactive Game between players without the use of gaming console. It’s a game that has its plot driven by dice rolls and decisions.

Players can choose to be adventurers, knights, kings, detectives, policemen and other professions, and aim to complete the storyline by becoming the protagonist of the story.

Most of the plot progression is determined by the Gamemaster (GM), but the story is influenced by the players’ actions, and it’s common to see the plot direction derail in a way the GM didn’t expect. The story develops through player interaction (of course, the decisions of the GM does influence things), so there’s a lot of freedom in the story, and the immersion level of the story is amazing.

“Well...I used to join a TRPG club during college.”

For some reason, Haruto gave a nostalgic look as he said this.

"Heh. That's unexpected." Itsuki said.

It was his own bias, but Itsuki had assumed that Haruto joined the tennis club.

"...The reason why I got interested in books is because I read the Replay light novel in middle school, so I always wanted to use the chance to play a TRPG myself. After that, when I had to choose clubs, I chose the TRPG club without hesitation."

And just to note, 'Replay' is a reading material created from a TRPG player (this is also called a session), and sometimes, they would also be published with illustrations.

An outstanding GM, outstanding players, and the dice; such uncertain factors that surpass the will of humans continue to brew, developing a story, and might be more dramatic than an intricately crafted plot, so while there aren't a lot of readers that actually played a TRPG, they can gain something similar to the fun of reading a light novel by reading a Replay novel.

This 'Grand Crest Replay Fantasia X Factory' Haruto's reading is considered a Replay novel, and the story is about 8 popular novelists and illustrators playing, clashing with characters filled with their own personalities, and creating a thoroughly intense story.

"So, you're one of those who went from being a GM to an author?" Itsuki asked.

As there's a lot of freedom in a TRPG, a GM needed skills to create an interesting scenario, and naturally, would need the patience to lead the players to the desired direction and the capability to handle unexpected changes. It was said that amongst the current professional authors, a few of them were TRPG GMs, and refined their story crafting skills through this.

Haruto once joined a TRPG club, and so Itsuki assumed he followed this pattern too.

"No...less than a year after I joined, the club disbanded..."

"...Is this going to be one of those long stories again?"

I don't want to hear such things now, that was the vibe Itsuki had as he asked

Haruto, who was giving a wry, lonely smile, “It won’t be long, so just listen... during the half year I joined the club, it felt okay...every week, everyone would hold sessions, and I too was GM for a few times. I dumped my college homework to come up with scenarios and original rules....back then, I thought everything was really interesting. There were about ten members or so, and I was the only freshman there, but the seniors were all really nice...only one of these seniors is a girl. She’s a pretty one, and has a large rack.”

“...Do I really have to hear you out until the very end?”

“Yeah...quite a few people liked that senpai in the club...or rather, the entire club...she never went out with any other guy. They all understood how each other felt, and had a silent oath to not confess to that senpai to avoid getting the club awkward...but right when summer vacation was about to end, things happened.”

“Alright, no need to tell me. I know what happened.”

“...Senpai confessed to me.”

“You see, I knew it!”

“...I rejected her confession. It’s a lot more fun playing TRPGs than it is to go out with girls, and I didn’t want to create this tense atmosphere in the club... however, after I rejected her, she started to date the other guys. It was common for her to be going out with two, three guys, and the relationships in the club were a mess. Everyone who came to the sessions were very aloof, and those who were dumped by her left...and even she left the club, leaving only the president and me behind. Prez and I didn’t have the strength to continue running the club... ‘it’s all your fault’, and prez told me that. Those words were really destructive.”

Saying that, Haruto filled his glass with beer, and downed it.

With a weak expression, Itsuki asked Haruto,

“...So, what am I supposed to do after hearing this common story of a club crashing? Can I call you ‘Kodaka-san’ from now on?”

“I can’t live up to that name. Kodaka-san did manage to keep the Neighbors’ Club intact, unlike me. I didn’t...I just had an inspiration after not having read

the Replay novels for a long time.”

“Just had an inspiration, huh...”

Itsuki’s face started to numb.

“Right, so because you ruined my mood for no good reason, as punishment, you’re going to be a TRPG GM!”

And then, Itsuki said this while pointing.

“Huh!?”

“I always had interest in playing a TRPG. Since you were a GM once, that makes things easy. Do your best and let me enjoy this.”

“I still have the anime work to deal with. I’m busy!”

“Like I care. You got time to drink and share stupid memories while I’m at work. It’s perfect.”

“...Haa....well, now that you mention it, I can’t deny it.”

Haruto showed a little smile, and chirped,

“Right, let’s play! What about the other players?”

“How many players do we need for a TRPG?”

“Anyway, it’ll be easier to play if we can get four players.”

“Hm, well, we can definitely get Lord Kani...it’s impossible to contact Setsuna...but is it okay to not limit it to authors?”

“Doesn’t matter.”

“Right. I’ll invite Miyako and my little brother.”

“Okay. Anyway, do those two have any TRPG experience?”

“Never asked them about that. I guess they’re beginners too.”

“Okay~ Nayu-chan probably hasn’t played it either. All beginners...right, I’ll go think of a plot immediately. Goodness, busy, busy.”

Haruto got up with a sigh, his smiling face lacking in the fake heartiness, flowing with the bubbly innocence of a child.

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And so, on a Sunday in early March.

Five people, Hashima Itsuki, Fuwa Haruto, Kani Nayuta, Shirakawa Miyako and Hashima Chihiro were gathered in Itsuki's apartment.

Seated at the windowside of the kotatsu was the GM Haruto, the one at the opposite end near the kitchen was Chihiro. To Chihiro's right was Miyako, and to her left was Itsuki, seated side by side with Nayuta.

"...Nii-san, can I really join?"

Itsuki heard Chihiro's whisper, and Nayuta smiled.

"Don't mind. I always wanted to have a time to play with my future brother-in-law."

"...Really. Please take care of me then."

Chihiro sounded a little miffed as he said this.

"It might be a little too quick, but I personally welcome you calling me sister-in-law."

"...No, there's no need for that."

"You seem a little listless? Have you unloaded in the morning?"

"Unloaded...? No, I have properly..."

"I'm asking you if you have masturbated in the morning."^[70]

"Mas...? I-I didn't!" Chihiro's face went beetroot, and Itsuki glared over in

annoyance,

“Hey. No sexual harassment on my little brother, Lord Kani.”

“It’s fine. He’s going to be my brother-in-law anyway.”

“Will not!” “Not at all!”

The Hashima brothers called out in unison.

Chihiro and Itsuki did play video games together a few times, but it was the first time Chihiro joined Itsuki’s friends, and that everyone got together. Chihiro did meet Nayuta, Miyako and Haruto a few times, all of whom often visited Itsuki, Chihiro would always excuse himself in fear of disturbing them, and went home straight away. Thus, he never had a chance to have a proper conversation with them.

Also, it was the first time Miyako and Haruto met.

But despite this, it seemed Miyako, Chihiro and Haruto were adept at interacting with others, so there should not be any issues. Such was Itsuki’s optimistic thoughts.

After the members who never met before greeted each other, Haruto spoke up.

“Eh, I’ll like to thank everyone for coming to participate today. This time, I’m inviting everyone to play a TRPG I designed based on an existing game. You guys are all beginners, so I’ll try my best to simplify the system. If there’s any player who has any requests, I’ll try to fulfil it as much as I can. If you have any suggestions, feel free to mention it.”

“Oh.” “Yes~” “Yes.” “Understood.” The quartet nodded.

—The world setting is a common fantasy world of swords and magic. In this world, there are a few continents, and the story is set in one such setting—the Chronica setting. Chronica itself has numerous countries, and there hasn’t been a major war between them over the past decades. Amongst them, the Westernmost country is called the Gagagia Kingdom.”

“GAGAGA Kingdom?”^[71]

“Gagagia Kingdom.”

Itsuki asked, and Haruto corrected him.

“...There are a lot of relics and caves within the borders of the country. Thus, many adventurers arrived in the kingdom of GAGAGA—Gagagia one after another, searching for treasures, or the fangs and claws of the monsters that reside in the caves, and other materials. Each of you guys are one of the adventurers...now then, please create adventurer roles for your identities.”

“Create them?” Miyako asked.”

“This time, I’ve already created characters for you guys, and the parameters and other number details for them have been completed. You can use that as a basis and adjust accordingly. The first type is the ‘knight’, with high attack and defense power, suitable for fighting enemies on the frontlines of protecting allies. The second character is the ‘rogue’, very agile, nimble, uses a bow and dagger for battle, and has the ability to identify traps and open treasures and locks. The third character is the ‘monk’, able to use recovery magic and holy offensive magic, has offensive and defensive abilities second only to that of the knight, and can be a frontline fighter. The fourth character is the ‘mage’, able to use powerful offensive magic spells and able to attack multiple enemies at once.”

“It’s a very balanced party, but I prefer to clear everything with a full party of monks or bards.”

Nayuta said “Specialist parties are rather interesting, but this time, I’d like to have everyone follow the rules. TRPGs are different from digital games though. Digital games allow you to gain XP points and retry over and over again, but TRPGs only give you one chance to clear. It’s very risky for anyone who strays away from the recommended gameplay.”

“Will we end up dying in the game?” Miyako asked, and Haruto gave a mischievous smirk.

“Of course, if you’re unlucky, you may die. If this really happens...anyway, if anyone really dies, we’ll think about it.”

“Ugh...I’ll be a knight then. Looks like it’s the least likely to die.”

“So that kind of reasoning...”

Itsuki's choice left Chihiro with a bitter smile.

"I'll be the mage then." Miyako said.

"So, Chihiro, do you want to be a monk or a rogue? I'll let my brother-in-law choose."

"...I'm not your brother-in-law. Please choose, Kani-san."

"Then, this sister-in-law here will choose monk then."^[72]

"..."

After the four of them chose their jobs, Haruto handed them the character sheets.

The character sheets included a brief introduction to the roles and abilities of the playable characters, and while the skills and unique equipment they had were already written down on the papers, their names, ages, genders, character backgrounds, interests, likes and dislikes remained blank.

"Well, fill in the blanks and create your own identities."

"We can set our own genders, huh..." Chihiro asked.

"Yeah, you can create a character that resembles yourself in real life, or you can play as a completely different character. It's fine for you to make it such that it's yourself who's transported to this fantasy world."^[73]

"..."

Chihiro gave a serious look at the character sheet, and peeked aside at Itsuki. The latter was scribbling down his own profile.

"...What kind of character are you playing as, Nii-san?"

"My character name's going to be Tsukiko, 17 years old. A pretty swordsman with long black hair."^[74]

"You're going to become a girl, senpai??"

Nayuta got excited.

"What do you mean become a girl!? I'm the type who always chooses a female character whenever I have to choose the gender of a game protagonist."

"Why?"

"The protagonist's appearance is the most common thing I see in a game. In that case, I find a pretty girl more interesting than a guy."^[75]

"I get it. It's like how it's cuter to use the female equipment in 'Monster Hunt' and 'Toukiden'."

Haruto, also in the female character camp, agreed.

"I see...so Itsuki-senpai wants to be a female knight...if there are hands and orcs, it'll be appropriate..." Nayuta said, and gave Haruto a look.

"...Well, it's a fantasy world, so of course there are such monsters around."

"I'll be looking forward to it."

Upon hearing Haruto's explanation, Nayuta gave a cheeky smirk with much intent behind it.

"...Then, if brother is going to be a girl, I'll try being a girl too...can I be Tsukiko-san's little sister?"

"Little sister!?"

Those words left Itsuki reacting excessively, and he stared at Chihiro's face intently.

"You're the little sister...w-well, that's okay, I guess?"

While Itsuki appeared to be faltering, Nayuta showed a displeased look.

"So I'll be senpai's little sister too! I'll be 10 years old! My interest is to be ecchi with my older sister! I like ecchi stuff too!"

""""Like hell there's such a 10-year-old around!!!"""

Itsuki, Miyako and Haruto retorted in unison.

"...I can't?"

""...No, it's not that you can't...well, whatever you want then."

Haruto answered, appearing to have given up.

"Hm...since the three adventurers are sisters, I guess it'll be more natural if I'm one of the sisters too."

Miyako pondered,

"Alright, then I'll be the eldest of the four sisters. I'll be twenty years old, like I am in real life."

"Mya-san's going to be my older sister. Ehehe."

Nayuta giggled, looking very delighted.

"Wait...if Miyako's the older sister...then, I'm your....little sister...?"

"Right."

"I-I'm the little sister."

"Perfect for you. You're a siscon anyway."

"Hold up. I do love little sisters, but this doesn't mean that I want to be a little sister myself!"

"...So do I lower my age? I-it's not like I can't be your little sister..."

"Hmmm...mmmmmmmm...mmmmmmmmmmmm....."

Miyako blushed as she asked, and Itsuki gave an ever-serious expression, before saying.

".....Well, let's leave things as it is."

"So you're able to accept...being my little sister..."

"Yeah. Please take care of me, big sis."

"You're just a little sister. Don't get cocky..."

And so, the four players decided to play as four sisters."

"Once you're done with your setting, it's the stat bonus points allocations. You can level up whatever parameter you like, 5 points at most."

"There's a 2D or 3D beside the strength and other stats. What do they mean?" Chihiro asked.

"The D refer to dice. The first number means that you can roll the dice to get the number. So 2D means 'roll two dice'."

"Is there a difference to the value of the dice roll?"

"Take for example, you met an enemy. If your dex stat is higher than the enemy's accuracy stat, then you're able to dodge the enemy's attack. Rolling the dice here is to determine that value."

"In other words, the higher the number rolled, the better?"

"That's right. There's only one die, and for every six points, you get another die, and so on. If your strength value is six, you get two rolls when you need to determine something with strength. If the value is twelve, you get three dice rolls."

"I see...so if my dex stat is eleven, I'll get three dice rolls when I increase a point?"

"Yep. Other than battle, and whether it's for collecting intel or opening treasure boxes, there's a lot of situations where you need to roll a die, so it's very important that you can roll more than once. If you need just one or two points to get a multiple of six, it's best to raise that stat."

The four of them brooded over it, and finally decided on the allocation of the bonus points.

"Now then, please create a unique skill for yourselves."

"Personal unique skills?"

Itsuki tilted his head, wondering.

"Call it a killer technique or a transformation technique or an ability to pass through walls, anything can do. Just explain the concept, and I'll show it in the system. However, if the designed skill is too overpowered or too convenient, I'll add demerits or strict usage conditions, so take note."^[76]

"Killer technique. Then I want the Railgun."^[77]

"R-railgun, huh?"

Miyako nonchalantly said, and Haruto's face froze.

"Eh? Don't you know? There's a light novel called 'Toaru Majutsu no Index', and there's a character I really like called Misaka Mikoto. That's the signature move of hers, a killer technique that injects electric currents into a coin and fires it out."

“...I know. There’s no light novel author out there who hasn’t heard of it.”

“Then so be it!”

“Oh-okay...”

Miyako gave a ‘whatever goes’ smile, and Haruto, together with Itsuki listening from nearby, were shivering in cold sweat.

“...Hey, is this really okay?”

“...Probably. We aren’t going to release this on a Replay volume...”^[78]

“Ah, so you can have such a killer technique too?”

Chihiro had an idea, and said with excitement.

“Then I want the Imagine Breaker.”

“Woah! This kid’s fearless too!”

“The ‘Imagine Breaker’ is the ability of the protagonist in ‘Toaru Majutsu no Index’. By touching it with the right hand, he can negate all supernatural powers.”^[79]

“...I know this. There’s no light novel author out there who doesn’t know that.”

“I’ll leave it to you then.”

“...Ah, okay.”

Chihiro asked with a tender, nonchalant voice, and again, a drop of cold sweat trickled down Haruto’s face.

“Not bad, Imagine Breaker. Miyako asked Chihiro innocently.^[80]

“Hm, I do think this move really suits the agile rogue.”

“And he did think through this properly...!”

While Chihiro commented, Haruto watched him with fear and respect.

“My turn!” Nayuta raised her hand,

“I want an ability that can power up senpai through ecchi!

“Yeah, got it.”

“...I never thought you would let that pass so easily.”

“Compared to how bad those two before were, a little ero is nothing much...”

Nayuta gave a surprised look, and Haruto said with an exasperated look.

Finally, Itsuki,

“Haruto. It’s a rare moment, so I’m going with a super amazing one.”

“...Whatever you like.”

“Now then, Unlimited Blade Works is mine!”^[81]

“Like hell it is.”

Itsuki’s eyes were dazzling like a kid as he said this, and Haruto could only cup his head in frustration.

Haruto had the players’ original abilities added into the game system, and sorted out the characters...and, while not fearful of any potential troubles, Haruto and Itsuki had some discussion before deciding to name their moves differently, and avoid using actual move names from current works. ^[82]

月子・ミッドフィールド

【プレイヤー】 羽島伊月

【年齢】 17

【性別】 女

【外見的特徴】

黒髪ロングの凛々しい顔立ちの美少女。右目は真紅で左目は蒼。白銀の鎧を纏う。胸と肩と腰は鎧によって守られているが他は軽装で、腹部は白い肌が露出しており、上腕から手までも素肌。下は太ももから膝下まで生足。

【生い立ち】

冒険者四姉妹の次女。とある大貴族の家に生まれたが、身内や家臣達の権力争いに嫌気がさして他の姉妹達と一緒に出奔。冒険者となってガガギア王国にやってきた。

【趣味】 エゴサーチ

【好きなもの】

妹、ファン、ベルギービール、エビ、ジンベエザメ、ふくろう、深海魚、鮎の塩焼き、春巻き、カニ

【嫌いなもの】

アマゾンレビューを自己表現の場だと思っているくそたわけ、2chの羽島伊月スレ、まとめサイトおよびそのエサども、「最近のラノベは～」という雑な言説およびそれが雑だということに気づいてすらいない阿呆、全裸のシーンで挿絵がないラノベ、協力者票とHP票とモニター票の比重が毎回変わる上に投票時には比重が公開されていない不透明なランキングおよびこれを鵜呑みにする蒙昧な大衆とそんなランキングを恥ずかしげもなく宣伝に使う商業主義に汚染された出版社

【パラメータ】

LV: 1 / 最大 HP: 27 / 最大 MP: 10 / 移動力: 3 / 筋力: 12 (3D)

精神力: 8 (2D) / 魔力: 7 (2D) / 敏捷性: 10 (2D) / 器用さ: 8 (2D)

運: 9 (2D) / 知識: 9 (2D) / 話術: 9 (2D) / 直感: 10 (2D)

【耐性 (ダメージ通過率。低いほど耐性がある)】

切断: 70 / 衝撃: 80 / 貢通: 80 / 熱: 100 / 冷気: 100

電撃: 100 / 神聖: 100 / 暗黒: 100

【状態異常耐性 (付着率。低いほど耐性がある)】

毒: 100 / 眠睡: 100 / 混乱: 100 / 麻痺: 100 / 石化: 100

魔封じ: 100 / 腕封じ: 100 / 足封じ: 100

【アクション】

流し斬り: 射程 1。消費 MP 0。命中判定、敏捷性 + 8。
単体に 2D + 5 の切断属性ダメージ

水平突き: 射程 1。消費 MP 0。命中判定、敏捷性 + 7。
単体に 2D + 5 の貫通属性ダメージ

シールドバッシュ: 射程 1。消費 MP 0。命中判定、敏捷性 + 6。
単体に 1D + 6 の衝撃属性ダメージ & 1 マス
弾き飛ばす

庇う: 消費 MP 0。自動成功。隣接するキャラへの攻撃を代わりに受ける

挑発: 消費 MP 0。敵 1 体の狙いを自分に向ける。
命中判定、話術 + 10

【ユニークスキル】

ファンタムスミス
幻想鍛冶: ゲーム中に一度でも目にしたことのある武器を複製し、武器固有のアクションを行う。複製された武器はアクション後に消滅する。消費 MP は複製する武器によって変化する。

【所持品】

ポーション × 2



千・ミッドフィールド

【プレイヤー】 羽島千尋 【年齢】 16 【性別】 女

【外見的特徴】

女子っぽい感じ？リボンを付けている。

【生い立ち】

冒険者四姉妹の三女。

【趣味】

料理、スポーツ

【好きなもの】

可愛いもの

【嫌いなもの】

嘘

【パラメータ】

LV: 1 / 最大 HP: 17 / 最大 MP: 15 / 移動力: 4 / 筋力: 7 (2D)
精神力: 7 (2D) / 魔力: 6 (2D) / 敏捷性: 15 (3D) / 器用さ: 13 (3D)
運: 12 (3D) / 知識: 9 (2D) / 話術: 8 (2D) / 直感: 10 (3D)

【耐性（ダメージ通過率。低いほど耐性がある）】

切断: 100 / 衝撃: 100 / 貫通: 100 / 熱: 100 / 冷気: 100
電撃: 100 / 神聖: 100 / 暗黒: 100

【状態異常耐性（付着率。低いほど耐性がある）】

毒: 100 / 睡眠: 100 / 混乱: 100 / 麻痺: 100 / 石化: 100
魔封じ: 100 / 腕封じ: 80 / 足封じ: 80

【アクション】

弓: 射程 5。消費 MP 0。命中判定、器用さ +5。
単体に 1D + 5 の貫通属性ダメージ

ナイフ: 射程 1。消費 MP 0。命中判定、器用さ +10。
単体に 1D + 7 の切断、貫通属性ダメージ

鍵開け: 消費 MP 0。成功判定、器用さ +5。
宝箱や扉の鍵を開ける

罠発見: 消費 MP 0。成功判定、直感 +5。
罠を発動前に発見する

挑発: 敵 1 体の狙いを自分に向ける。命中判定、話術 + 10

【ユニクスキル】

サルダバスト
偽神の御手: 射程 1。消費 MP 0。命中判定、敏捷性 +3。
攻撃系回復系問わず、手で触れた魔法を全て打ち消す。マジックアイテムに触ると自動的に破壊する。

【所持品】

ポーション × 2

ミヤコ・ミッドフィールド

【プレイヤー】 白川京

【年齢】 20

【性別】 女

【外見的特徴】

御坂美琴ちゃんみたいな感じ。

【生い立ち】

冒険者四姉妹の長女。

【趣味】

ショッピング

【好きなもの】

頑張ってる人

【嫌いなもの】

頑張ってる人を馬鹿にすること

【パラメータ】

LV: 1 / 最大 HP: 14 / 最大 MP: 30 / 移動力: 2 / 筋力: 5 (1D)
精神力: 10 (2D) / 魔力: 16 (3D) / 敏捷性: 6 (2D) / 器用さ: 7 (2D)
運: 9 (2D) / 知識: 12 (3D) / 話術: 10 (2D) / 直感: 7 (2D)

【耐性 (ダメージ通過率。低いほど耐性がある)】

切断: 100 / 衝撃: 100 / 貫通: 100 / 熱: 80 / 冷気: 80

電撃: 50 / 神聖: 100 / 暗黒: 100

【状態異常耐性 (付着率。低いほど耐性がある)】

毒: 100 / 眠睡: 100 / 混乱: 100 / 麻痺: 100 / 石化: 100

魔封じ: 80 / 腕封じ: 100 / 足封じ: 100

【アクション】

杖で叩く: 射程 1。消費 MP 0。
単体に 1D の衝撃属性ダメージ

ファイアボール: 射程 4。消費 MP 0。
範囲内に 2D + 5 の熱属性ダメージ

アイスニードル: 射程 4。消費 MP 3。
単体に 2D + 10 の冷気、貫通属性ダメージ

エナジーボルト: 射程 3。消費 MP 4。
範囲内に 3D + 5 の電撃属性ダメージ

【ユニークスキル】

トールバレット
神雷の魔弾: 射程 10。消費 MP 15。命中判定、器用さ + 10。
単体に 5D + 25 の貫通、衝撃、電撃属性ダメージ。ミスリル銀貨 1 枚を消費

【所持品】

ポーション × 2



デスマスク・ミッドフィールド

【プレイヤー】 可児那由多

【年齢】 10

【性別】 女

【外見的特徴】

銀髪ロリです

【生い立ち】

冒険者四姉妹の四女。

【趣味】

月子お姉ちゃんとエッチすること

【好きなもの】

エッチ

【嫌いなもの】

あいつら

【パラメータ】

LV : 1 / 最大 HP : 19 / 最大 MP : 20 / 移動力 : 3 / 筋力 : 10 (2D)

精神力 : 13 (3D) / 魔力 : 9 (2D) / 敏捷性 : 9 (2D) / 器用さ : 8 (2D)

運 : 10 (2D) / 知識 : 12 (3D) / 話術 : 11 (2D) / 直感 : 12 (3D)

【耐性（ダメージ通過率。低いほど耐性がある）】

切断 : 100 / 衝撃 : 100 / 対通 : 100 / 熱 : 100 / 冷氣 : 100

電撃 : 100 / 神聖 : 80 / 暗黒 : 80

【状態異常耐性（付着率。低いほど耐性がある）】

毒 : 80 / 睡眠 : 80 / 混乱 : 80 / 麻痺 : 80 / 石化 : 80

魔封じ : 100 / 腕封じ : 100 / 足封じ : 100

【アクション】

メイス：射程 1。消費 MP 0。命中判定、敏捷性 + 3。
単体に 2D + 3 の衝撃属性ダメージ

ヒール：射程 3。消費 MP 2。自動成功。
単体の HP を 1D + 5 回復

キュアポイズン：射程 2。消費 MP 2。
成功判定、精神力 + 5。単体の毒を解除

ホーリーライト：射程 3。消費 MP 3。
単体に 2D + 5 の神聖属性ダメージ

【ユニークスキル】

リリムキス
堕天使の献身：射程 1。全 MP を消費し、次のターン行動不能になる。相手の合意がある場合は自動成功。合意がなければ命中判定、器用さ + 0。粘膜接触により相手を強化。3 ターンの間、対象の HP と MP と移動力以外の全パラメータが 1.3 倍、全耐性が 2 倍になり、アクションの威力判定時、ダイスが 1 個増える。

【所持品】

ポーション × 2

After the player characters were set, Haruto, being the GM, played the BGM (of a famous RPG) from his smartphone, and recited the prologue he prepared. And so, the story of the four sisters began. [83]

GM: On a small country at the Westernmost end of the Chronica Continent, the kingdom of Gagagia. Four adventurers arrive at the border town of Aegis, a three days' journey from the capital. The four sisters are born to powerful nobles of a certain country, left home due to their hatred of the power struggle in their family and the officials...and became adventurers. Now then, everyone, please introduce your character.

(Tsukiko) Itsuki: I'm the second sister of the Midfields, Tsukiko. This amazing looking sword and the silver armor and shield are all stolen from home. I'm a pretty swordswoman with long black hair, I have different color eyes, red on the right and blue on the left. Besides the chest, armor and waist, I'm dressed in light equipment, there's a large patch of white skin exposed on my belly, my upper arms are showing skin, and at the lower body, my legs are bared. My interest is egosurfing. My likes are little sisters, books, Belgium beer, prawns, whale sharks, owls, salt roasted deep sea fish and sweetfish, spring rolls. What I hate are the big idiots at Amazon... idiots who think everything is a self-insert, 2ch's Hashima Itsuki's discussion threads, matome sites and the users there who keep saying nonsensical stuff like 'light novels nowadays are~', and the idiots who can't tell if those comments are rubbish, light novels with scenes of completely naked people and no illustrations, and the collaborators rankings and the online rankings and the monitor rankings weightage of voting that keeps changing and the weightages are never officially made transparent and the stupid mass market that uses the voting results as gospel and the publishers who are corrupted by capitalism and use such rankings for promotions, I got a whole lot more things that I hate, but there's too much for me to write them all down. [84]

GM: That's a whole bunch of nonsense! Anyway, that last bit of your interest, likes and dislikes are just copied from yourself, right?

Tsukiko: I can't?

GM: Not at all...the most important thing is whether you can get into your character, so this profile is all okay. Next, Miyako-san.

Miyako (Miyako): Mine's not as detailed as Itsuki's profile...eh, I'm the eldest daughter, and my name is derived from my actual name. I think I'm proficient at using offensive magic. Appearance-wise, I think it's similar to Mikoto-chan.

Deathmask (Nayuta): Mya-san, isn't your character age at 20? Mikoko-chan is a middle schooler...

Miyako: I-it's just a concept. What's wrong with that!?^[85]

Sen (Chihiro): Eh, my turn now...I'm the third daughter, Sen. I'm a rogue. Appearance-wise...a-a cute girl. I-I have a ribbon on my head. Please take care of me.

Deathmask: And so, I'm the youngest daughter, the monk Deathmask. I have the appearance of a silver haired loli, but I have developed big breasts...anyway, we're four sisters? Do we need a brother mixed in?

GM: You guys decided this yourself. Anyway, your name's really unique.

Miyako: I guess the parents never loved the kid when they gave her the name Deathmask.

Tsukiko: How about we set it up such that we have other brothers, but that the girls at home are just used for political marriage.

Miyako: Erm, we're the Midfield family, right? Best choice to leave from that kind of place.

GM: Once you're done with your family background, let's continue the story. The BGM will be changed according to region....it's admirable that you guys left home, but after a long journey, you finally made it to this city, you spent every piece of silver you had, and are now penniless. You can't find lodging, let alone continue on your travels. What next?^[86]

Deathmask: No choice then...anyway, let's forget about reality and enjoy ourselves with ecchi...Tsukiko onee-sama.

Tsukiko: Are you an idiot? Hey, stop clinging at my arm.

Sen: Deathmask-san's way of life is so like Setsuna's...what time is it now?

GM: Almost noon.

Sen: Then let's find some work before the sun sets. Maybe we might get enough money to live in an inn.

Deathmask: You're so reliable, Sen-chan. As to be expected of my older sister and future brother-in-law.

Miyako: How do we go about looking for work?

GM: Go to a bar or somewhere similar, and there'll be a request board. You're adventurers. You can go to the ruins to look for treasures or beat monsters to get materials and exchange them for money.

Sen: It does seem that we're more likely to earn money by accepting requests.

Deathmask: I'm the type to wander around, see where I go, move where I go until everything gets wiped out..

GM: As I said, once you get wiped out in a TRPG, you can't start over...eh, while you're discussing what will happen, four men suddenly appear before you. Looking at them, it seems they're also adventurers like you. These four men seem to have been drinking in broad daylight, and can't even walk straight, "Hehehe, you gals look cute. Wanna drink together with us?"^[87]

Tsukiko: Hm. Drinking out there in the day's fine too...

GM: "Ehhehe, you're the reasonable one, girl. How about it? Wanna have some drinks at the bar?"

Tsukiko: "Unfortunately, we don't have any money on us. But in this Middle Ages world setting, there should be some ale in the bar...I wanna drink..."^[88]

GM: "Right, the ale here is the best, you know? You'll regret it if you don't drink! Don't worry about the money. Leave the bill to us!"

Tsukiko: What? Really!?

GM: "Of course, kekeke."

Tsukiko: Then, if I can drink without paying, there's no reason to say no. Alright, let's go.

GM: "Kekeke. Drink up as much as you want." "We'll serve you the richest

one of them off."

Tsukiko: Gulps...then I'll enjoy myself.

Sen: Wai, n-no—sister!!

Miyako: They're obviously up to no good here, okay? Please don't get tricked by them so easily! [\[89\]](#)

Tsukiko: Wh-what!? Is this it?

GM: These guys were really drink off their minds. You really didn't realize it there...aren't you being too easy to believe...

Deathmask: Good thing senpai's not a real girl...you nearly got milk dumped into your lower body by that man slut prince...though that might be interesting...

Tsukiko: Ugh, you guys dare to abduct me and do such an evil thing. Unforgivable! I'm going to crush you!

GM: Why are your words being so naturally like an eroge swordswoman...eh, "Oh? Wanna fight, girl?" The men show lewd smirks as they taunt you. [\[90\]](#)

Miyako: Of course we're going to fight! We're going to show these lowlifes who's boss!

Sen: I don't think now's the time to waste on such useless fighting...ah, but it does seem like we can get money by defeating them...if they say they're going to treat us to drinks, this means that they should have money.

GM: So Sen-chan's just calmly planning to rob the valuables—she's cute, but I never expected her to be so hard-boiled. Now then, you're going to fight these drunk adventurers?

The players nodded, and Haruto changed to a battle BGM, took out a piece of paper and some mini figurines from his backpack. Those mini figurines were in armor and robes, wielding weapons like swords and staffs in hand, dressed in fantasy clothing. The papers are divided into ten x ten grids, and Haruto placed these mini figurines onto the piece of paper. [\[91\]](#)

"This is Tsukiko."

The mini figurine representing Tsukiko was a knight equipped with shield and armor. (Hulking guy).

“This is Sen-chan.”

Representing Sen (with a really nice face) is a young girl wielding a bow and wearing light armor.

“This is Miyako.”

Representing Miyako is something that appeared to be a witch (and with a nice delicate face too.) “This is Deathmask.”

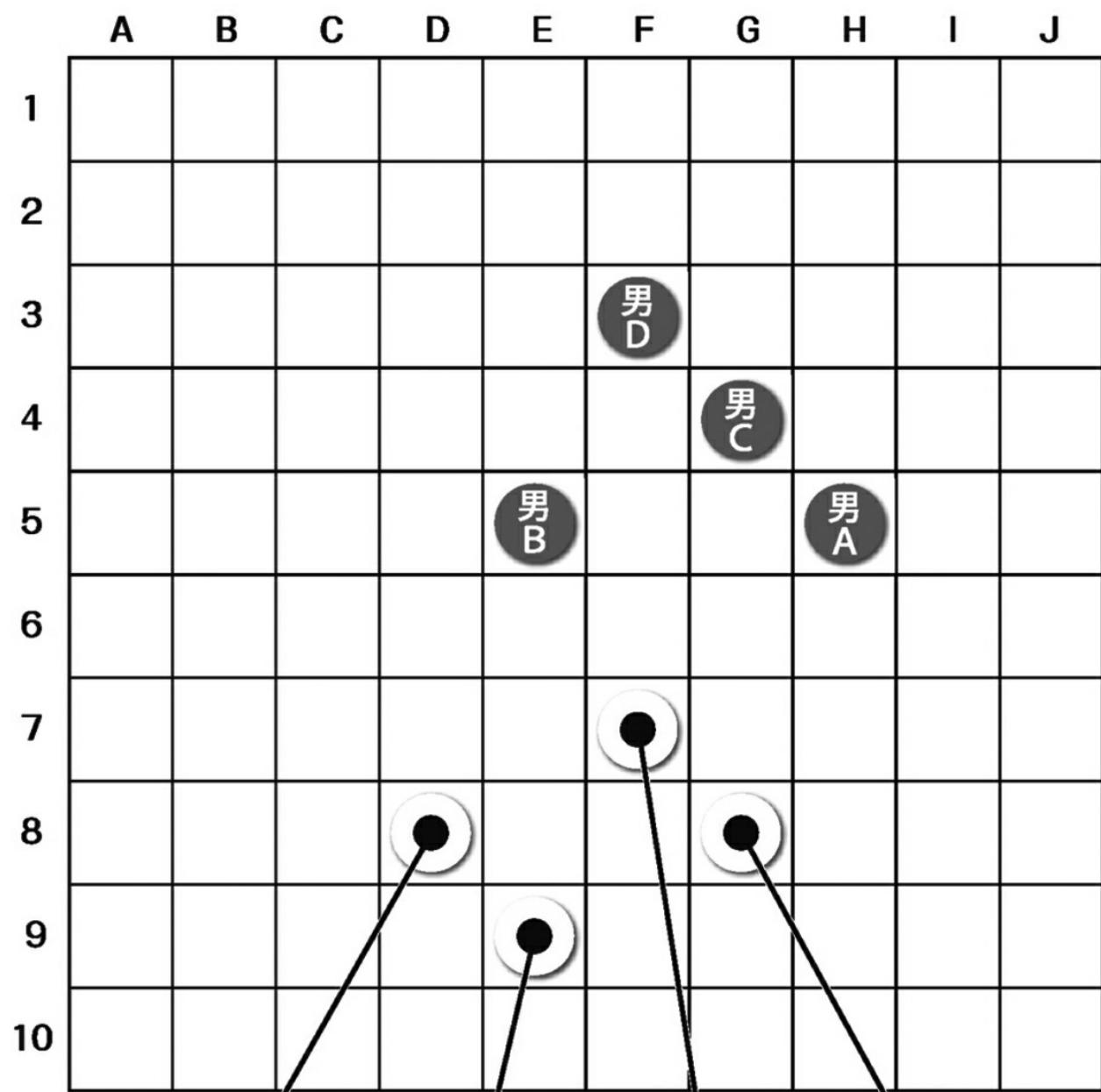
Representing Deathmask is a hulking guy dressed in priest robes and raising a hammer.

“This is an old guy, right...?” “This Mozgus-sama looking priest is a young girl...?”^[92]

While the players all looked somewhat perplexed, Haruto grimaced.

“This are borrowed from some foreign TRPG, don’t think too much into them...next, these guys are the enemies.”

Haruto brought out the male mini figurines wielding swords, and set them against the four sisters’ figurines.



千



ミヤコ



月子



デスマスク

"The battle shall be held on this ten x ten square map. Including enemies, there'll be 'movement' and 'actions' starting from the character with the highest agility, and the objective is to win. 'actions' basically mean attacking using the stats given on the character sheets, or use items to heal. As the term implies, 'movement' means that you move to attack within range or attack the enemies from afar. The number of grids you can move is based on your agility stat. You can also do a hit and run by swapping the order around."

"It's similar to a simulation game, huh? Like 'Fire Emblem' or 'Tactics Ogre'." Nayuta said.

"Something like that." Haruto nodded.

GM: Now then, let's continue—"kekeke, let's tell you what the reality is, you girls." The men raised their weapons with lewd smiles. It appears that they have intention to strike. Of the enemies, Man A and C wield swords, B wields a knife, and D wields a bow.

Tsukiko: Let's beat the shit out of you guys!

GM: Now then, battle start. We'll start with the character with the highest agility, so in order, Sen, Tsukiko, Man B, Deathmask, Man A, Man C, Man D, Miyako. First, let's start with Sen-chan.

Sen: Eh, then I'll move a bit, and shoot the 'bow' at B guy that moves first.

GM: The accuracy of the bow is based on dexterity stat. Sen-chan, roll three dice.

Sen: Okay...five, four, five, total is 14.

GM: Now then, we need to add the different additional value for every skill... +5 to the bow, so 19. Nice, time to determine if B guy can dodge.

At this moment, Haruto took out a rectangular board, and placed it before him. The sides were folded in a N shape, so that it could stand up.

"What is that?" Miyako asked.

"It's called a master screen. This thing is used to block out the enemy dice and the GM's personal data, so that the players can't see."

Haruto said, and rolled the dice behind the screen.

GM: Man B failed to dodge. Sen-chan's arrow hits successfully....and just to note, as the guys are all drunk, their dex and accuracy will be affected negatively.

Deathmask: So basically, you can hit them just by attacking randomly?

GM: Now then, it's time to determine the damage of the arrow.

Sen: Roll one die, right? 4 plus 5, so 9.

GM: "Wahh!" Man B shrieked, but he didn't lose all his combat ability.

Deathmask: We can't tell how many HP the enemy has?

GM: Only can tell if the attack's effective and the enemy's weak. I can't reveal the exact values.

Tsukiko: I see...now then, my turn. I'll attack the Man B nearby with 'flowing slash'. Accuracy is 3, 4, 6 + 8 equals 21. Die!

GM: 21?...should be a definite hit. Roll the dices for damage then.

Tsukiko: 4, 5 and 4 equals 14. Is he done?

GM: Unfortunately not.

Tsukiko: But the 'flowing slash' hit him!

GM: Now it's time for Man B to attack. He slashes at Tsukiko before him. First, I'll determine the accuracy for him...Tsukiko, use your dex to determine the dodge.

Tsukiko: 1, 2, 3...so little!

GM: The man's attack hits Tsukiko. Damage is...ah, quite a high number, but Tsukiko has a buff against slash attacks, so multiplier is 0.7—so 7 points of damage. Please deduct 7 from the character HP value.

Tsukiko: Ugh, I won't lose to such an attack!

GM: After the attack, Man B retreats back, and turn ends. Now, time for Deathmask.

Deathmask: Hmph! I can't attack Man B now. Anyway, I'll go behind Tsukiko onee-sama and inject this burning hot 'heal' deep into her body. Hoho, relax, onee-sama, it won't hurt.

Tsukiko: Why does it sound so lewd from your mouth!?

Deathmask: I'm going to inject it all, so just count how many drops of water are there on the ceiling. I'm coming. Uu! I came...eh, 4+5 equals 9.

Tsukiko: Kuk, I recovered from the damage completely, but it feels like I lost something...

GM: Now then, A, C and D will take action. Can you last?

Men A, C, and D attack Tsukiko.

"Ugh, what are you bastards doing!?"

Tsukiko managed to dodge a slash by Man A, but due to bad luck, got hit by the sword of Man C and Man D.

Thanks to the defensive buff against slashes and piercing damage, he managed to limit the damage, but Itsuki's HP was already left at half.

GM: "Kekeke. Surrender while you can, girl."

Tsukiko: Too early! I won't fall here...!

Deathmask: ...If this was some eroge, the next part's going to be the humiliation part. My heart's racing.

Miyako: Right, my turn. What spell shall I use...

GM: The enemies are all gathered in front of Tsukiko. A 'Fireball' can hit all three. [93]

Miyako: Then, that!

Takunk!

The fireball released by Miyako exploded right between the trio A C D, and they all got hit for massive damage.

"I did it!"

"As to be expected of you, onee-sama." "Not bad."

Deathmask and Tsukiko gave praise, and on the other hand...

"It's hot...! You angered me!"

"I'm gonna get serious here!"

Once the men understood that they should not underestimate the sisters, they sobered up.

GM: Now then, it's Sen-chan's turn to move next. Just to note, as they are now sober, the demerits are gone.

Sen: Understood. I'll move to Nee-san and use a potion to heal her.

Tsukiko: Ah, thanks.

Sen: Eh, a potion's recovery is $2D + 6$, so—

GM: But the moment Sen-chan makes a move, the bottle breaks. [94]

Sen: Eh!?

GM: Sen's unique skill...'Jaldabaoth' has the ability to erase all magic, and even a magic medicine, the potion is no exception. [95]

Sen: I can't touch the bottle?

GM: There's a unique spell on the bottle filled with the potion. There's this addition room.

Deathmask: This is some evil game design there, man slut prince...

GM: This just shows that her ability is too strong that it has to be limited. Right, now Sen's movements and actions are over. Time for Yukiko.

Sen: Sorry Nee-san...

Tsukiko: Don't worry. We'll just have to finish them off before we get

finished!

Tsukiko sent the Man A flying with ‘shield bash’. Man A got damaged, but wasn’t beaten.

Man B, who retreated beforehand, again attacked Tsukiko before her, but this time, Tsukiko managed to block his attack successfully with a shield.

“As to be expected of you, onee-sama!”

Deathmask continued to cast the ‘heal’ spell, and Tsukiko’s HP recovered somewhat.

It was then A, C, and D’s turn to move. Man A, furious at being hit away, slashed at Tsukiko, but the latter managed to use the blade successfully, and parried it away.

“Damn it! Right, I’ll attack that girl wearing the light armor beside her!”

Man C raised his sword at Sen, who’s right beside Tsukiko.

A powerful blow, but the speed’s slow, so the nimble Sen should be able to dodge it easily.

However—

GM: ...This is bad. We have a critical hit.

Sen: Critical?

GM: Anything with more than two 6-rolls on the accuracy is considered a critical hit—the attack will hit, regardless of the dex value.

Sen: Eh!

GM: And the critical hit will have a damage bonus based on a level.

Sen: ...

GM: So...Man C attacks Sen-chan, and hits. And the damage is...eh, sorry, 11 points. I think my roll’s too good here...sorry.

Sen: E-eleven points damage...eh, I only have 17 HP...left with 6..."

Miyako: She might die if another hit lands on her...

GM: Now then...Man's D bowgun shall strike without mercy. Please determine the dex value.

Sen: ...2, 2 and 4, so 8...! Is this enough...?

GM: Ah, too bad, it'll hit.

Sen: This...

GM: Anyway, Tsukiko.

Tsukiko: Hm?

GM: You have the command to 'protect', and take the attack for a neighboring character. Your decision?

Tsukiko: ...! Of course I'm doing it! I'll protect my little sister!

GM; Right, so Tsukiko protects Sen, and takes 4 points of damage.



Tsukiko: This damage isn't much. You alright, little sis?

Sen: Th-thanks brother...

Tsukiko: It's the older brother's job to protect the little sister...ah, I'm the older sister now^[96]

Miyako: My turn now...anyway, let's use a potion to recover all of Chihiro-kun's HP.

Miyako used the potion on Sen, and Sen's HP was completely restored.

On the next turn, Sen moved behind Tsukiko, and fired her bow at Man A.

"Gahh!!"

With a shriek, Man A collapsed onto the floor.

"Finally got rid of one...!"

Itsuki used a potion on himself to recover, but he got attacked by Man B again, and took damage.

Deathmask: We're just killing ourselves slowly if this keeps up. I feel that we need to wipe them all out with a powerful spell.

Miyako: My magic can attack multiple enemies at once, but I can't possibly wipe them all out, I guess.

Deathmask: Normally, this should be the case, but it should be possible with power up.

Miyako: Power up?

Deathmask: By using my unique skill 'offering of the fallen angel', I'll be able to power up your skill greatly, Mya-san.

Miyako: W-wait a second! That move of yours needs you to do lewd things to increase the power, right!?^[97]

Deathmask: We've got no other choice, onee-sama...!^[98]

Miyako: Even if you threaten me so directly, I won't be fooled! There has to

be some other way! [99]

Deathmask: That's not true. Do ecchi with me, Mya-san.

Miyako: You just find it fun!

Deathmask: It's rare to have such a unique skill. Of course I have to try it out.

Miyako: I'll just use the railgun instead! Surely I'll be able to take down someone! [100]

GM: Unfortunately, to fire a railgun...correction, a' 'Tall Ballet', every shot will need a mithril silver coin.

Miyako: Mithril silver coin?

GM: It's a coin made of a unique metal of a mysterious silver. It's very rare, and naturally, you don't have one at all.

Miyako: This...

Deathmask: So ecchi is the only way after all! Prepare yourself! [101]

Miyako: I-I don't want it! I want to offer my first to the one I like...!

Deathmask: You're still pretending to a virgin at this point? What happened to the Mya-san who changed guys like clothes?

Miyako: Do-don't say it like I'm a slut here! Anyway, isn't Itsuki the one you like!? How can you fool around with others here!

Deathmask: Right now, I'm not that innocent girl whose heart will race and face will blush just by touching the fingers. I'm Deathmask-chan, a loli bitch who goes both ways. [102]

GM: Ah, and just to note, 'offering of the fallen angel' is a skill that needs skin contact, so just a kiss will do. [103]

Deathmask: Wh-what did you say...! Why did it end up with this childish setting...! [104]

GM: We got people under 18 here. It's necessary. [105]

Deathmask: Uu...man slut prince is actually so fussy...let's kiss then, Mya-san.

Miyako: ...Well, it's just a kiss...it's just a game...not a real kiss...

Deathmask: Then I'll move to Mya-san and activate 'offering of a fallen angel'. With her agreement, the skill naturally works. Tucking in, chuu—

Miyako: Wait! We don't have to kiss for real![[106](#)]

Deathmask: Just kidding...the tongue of the young ten year old girl wraps around the soft lips of the twenty year old older sister, and reaches deep into the mouth. Their tongues wrap around in a lewd manner as they exchange fluids, and the moist, lewd sounds keep frolicking as Miyako onee-sama lets out a "nn...a, ahhh...❤" moan.[[107](#)]

Miyako: Wait, do-don't make up my reaction here, okay!?

Deathmask: "Ehehe, onee-sama, you're so cute...❤" Deathmask kept gobbling up Miyako's tongue as she undid the sash of the latter's robe. Miyako's robe slides to the ground, revealing nice, smooth skin. "Kyaa, no, it's embarrassing...!" Miyako stopped kissing, and a sticky string of fluid was pulled between their tongues. "No, we can't do this." Miyako blushed as she wanted to push the petite Deathmask aside, but it was so weak. "Fufu, you say no, onee-sama, but you really are looking forward to it, aren't you?" Deathmask gives a mischievous smile as she reaches her hand towards Miyako's undergarments, nimbly removing the bra and the shorts with one hand. After enjoying a thoroughly naked Miyako who's shivering with fear and anticipation, Deathmask naturally removes her clothes and sucks at Miyako's nipple, licking the tip with her tongue. "Ahh!" Miyako moaned out loud. "Hehehe. Are you enjoying this feeling? How erotic, onee-sama." Deathmask continued to attack the nipple, touching her delicate fingers all over Miyako's body, and Miyako's made to let out audible, cute moaning. Finally, the fingers are about to invade Miyako's most sensitive part. "Onee-sama, you're so wet and sticky here. How are you so lewd?" Miyako appeared to be left for dead, panting blankly as she begs Deathmask, "I can't take it anymore...!"[[108](#)]

Miyako: I can't take it anymore...![[109](#)]

Slap!

A thoroughly blushing Miyako slapped Nayuta on the head.

“...It hurts, Mya-san.”

Nayuta flatly stated, her face still somewhat red.

“Uu...I just said a kiss is fine, you idiot...”[\[110\]](#)

With a teary look, Nayuta gave Miyako a sneaky grin.

“It’s your fault for being so perverted, onee-sama...anyway, someone could have stopped us. I couldn’t figure out where to stop. I didn’t know what to do.”[\[111\]](#)

As for the other three, Chihiro was blushing furiously, and lowered her head without saying anything. Itsuki and Haruto was completely engrossed in Nayuta’s own story, their faces red as their hearts pounded.[\[112\]](#)

“...Anyway, I didn’t expect you to be able to come up with such a lewd passage.”



"This isn't too difficult for an author, and I didn't really refine it."

Nayuta answered without showing much concern, "...Really?" Miyako exchanged looks with Itsuki and Haruto.

"...If you ask me whether I can do it, the answer is yes."

"I can, I really can, but I won't be saying it in front of others."^[113]

Itsuki answered, and Haruto grimaced.

"...Really, all authors are perverts."^[114]

Miyako appeared impressed and yet stunned, and sighed,

"GM: Eh...anyway, Deathmask's 'offering of the fallen angel' has succeeded. Deathmask's MP is down to zero, and won't be able to move during the next turn. Miyako's endurance and abilities are increased drastically, but there's no need to calculate anymore."^[115]

Miyako: Eh?

GM: After seeing Miyako and Deathmask suddenly start their perverted ways, the men abandoned all thoughts on the battle and watched on like drunkards. Suddenly, a shrill whistle echoed, and ten men or so passed through the excited crowd. It appears from their outfits that they are soldiers. "We are the knights of this city! End the battle!" Saying this, the knights discover the passionate actions of Deathmask and Miyako. First, they're stunned, and they recover, yelling, "We-we're arresting you on charges of outrage of modesty!"

Miyako: Ehhh!? How!

Deathmask: Wait, onee-sama and I were just naked in public and engaging in lewd acts.^[116]

GM: That's an outrage of modesty.

Deathmask: I guessed so.

Miyako: I didn't do anything!

GM: "Th-then, we'll excuse ourselves..." The men who battled the four sisters scamper away, and you four are the only ones left.

Sen: Wh-what do we do...let's escape.

GM: You're surrounded by the knights, it's impossible to run now.

Tsukiko: So we can only fight our way out now!

Sen: is this really alright?

GM: You might have a chance of beating the knights, but you'll become fugitives. Right, your choice?

Tsukiko: Mm... [\[117\]](#)

Deathmask: Looks like we can only follow them out. We'll explain the details later. [\[118\]](#)

Miyako: Why are you being so calm? You're the cause of this.

Deathmask: Anyway, hurry up and put on your clothes, onee-sama. I already put them on, by the way. [\[119\]](#)

Miyako: Ehh!? You're despicable!

GM: "Anyway, come along with us."

Tsukiko: Uu, whatever you want.

Deathmask: You hear that, knights! It's a simulation! A simulation! [\[120\]](#)

Tsukiko: ?

GM:These guards are all decent people, and don't think that much...ehh, anyway, the four sisters are whisked off by the knights, and locked in a jail outside the city. Of course, all your weapons are confiscated. "Reflect on this over the night, you sluts!" [\[121\]](#)

Miyako: I'm not a slut! Uuu...I never thought I would end up arrested due to public outrage of modesty....

GM: Anyway, you were arrested because of the commotion that occurred on the streets.

Miyako: That's a whole lot different from lewding, okay!

Tsukiko: ...And then what? Jailbreak?

Deathmask: Even without our weapons, Mya-san should have been powered up enough after the ecchi to break the jail doors.

Miyako:Do I? I'm not going to be toyed for nothing if I don't make a ruckus...

Sen: But it does look like we'll be released tomorrow. Better lay low for now...

GM: While the four sisters are discussing in the jail cell, there was a voice from outside the cell.

Tsukiko: Hm?

Gm: Standing outside is a blond, innocent girl with emerald eyes in a dress, someone who clearly didn't fit into this sort of place. [122]

Deathmask: I see...so she's the jail warden here? Innocent looking, but probably a super pervert who loves to interrogate criminals. [123]

Tsukiko: Ugh, even if you interrogate me, I won't back down!

GM: "...No, I'm not some jail warden, and of course I won't be doing such a scary thing like interrogation. I'm the daughter of the ruler of this Aegis City, Sylvia. To be honest, I am impressed by your abilities. There is something I will like to ask for you."

Tsukiko: ...Wait, I don't know what's there to be impressed by some sluts who got locked up for public indecency. [124]

Miyako: So I say, I'm not a slut! [125]

Deathmask: it might not be appropriate here, but Silvia's eyes are probably out of whack. [126]

GM: "Be-because, the four of you have outstanding eyes. You didn't bring any male companions along, so I suppose you're very skilled."

Tsukiko: So you see what you want to see and twist your understanding of reality according to yourself and you have no idea of your own ugliness...I hate people like you. [127]

GM: "There's no need to be so harsh when you just met for the first time... anyway, please listen to me, okay?" [128]

Sen: Let's just listen to what she has to say.

GM: "Erm...thanks. Looks like you're the most reasonable of them all. So

here's how it goes—”

Gatagata!

While Haruto was reading Silvia's line, the BGM of the smartphone he placed on the kotatsu suddenly changed to a different ringtone [129]

“Woah! So-sorry. It's the editor.”

Haruto hurriedly left the kotatsu, went to the kitchen, received the call as he kept his voice down.

“Yes, this is Fuwa.”

“Ah, sorry. This is Kawabe from the editorial department. Is it convenient to talk now?”

“I'm not at home...is there something urgent?”

“Ahh, there's something I want to check with you, sensei. We should have received your afterward for the manga version. Have you submitted it yet? I haven't received it thus far, so I was wondering if there was some mail trouble..”

“Eh...! Ah, so-sorry, I forgot! I'll send it over today!”

“I see. I'll leave it to you then, sensei...anyway, it is rare for you to forget your work, Fuwa-sensei. Did something happen?”

“Not really...I was engrossed in some other things...”

“Eh?”

“An-anyway, I'll hurry up and send it over! Sorry to cause you trouble!”

Once the call was done, Haruto returned to Itsuki and the others.

“...Sorry, I got some urgent matters to handle. That'll be all for today's session.”

“What!? I feel the story's about to get started!”

“...I'm really sorry.”

Haruto lowered his head in apology, and Itsuki looked peeved, saying in frustration.

“...Well, let’s just continue next time.”

“Yeah.” “Looking forward to it too.” Miyako and Chihiro chimed in.

“...You guys are willing to continue?”

Haruto timidly asked, “Do you have to ask the obvious?” and the other four gave such a look.

“I was really bullied, but this game is really interesting.” Miyako said. [130]

“This is the first time I knew of such a game. Thank you for letting us play, gamemaster.”

Chihiro gave a tender smile.

“I’m going to do unspeakable things to Tsukiko onee-sama next time.”

“Enough already. I don’t want to rely on such shameless moves.”

“Man slut prince. I hope that you’ll allow something that lets senpai get into some indecent plot development, like being touched by orcs hands or slimes.” [131]

“I’ll think about it.” Haruto gave a grimace. “...Really, thanks guys. I really enjoyed myself.”

While Haruto gave a tearful looking smile, Itsuki muttered,

“...Is that your old trauma at work?”

“...More or less...thank you Itsuki.”

妹

That night.

In a house that was a 20-minute bus ride from Itsuki’s house—the Hashima’s

bathroom.

Hashima Chihiro was in a bath, recalling everything that happened in the TRPG that she played today.

—Today was really fun...

Chihiro never thought she would have a chance to play a game with brother and his friends. Everyone was interesting—though being a ‘future stepbrother’ really left Chihiro a little troubled.

And then—

“I’ll protect my little sister!”

“Fufu...”

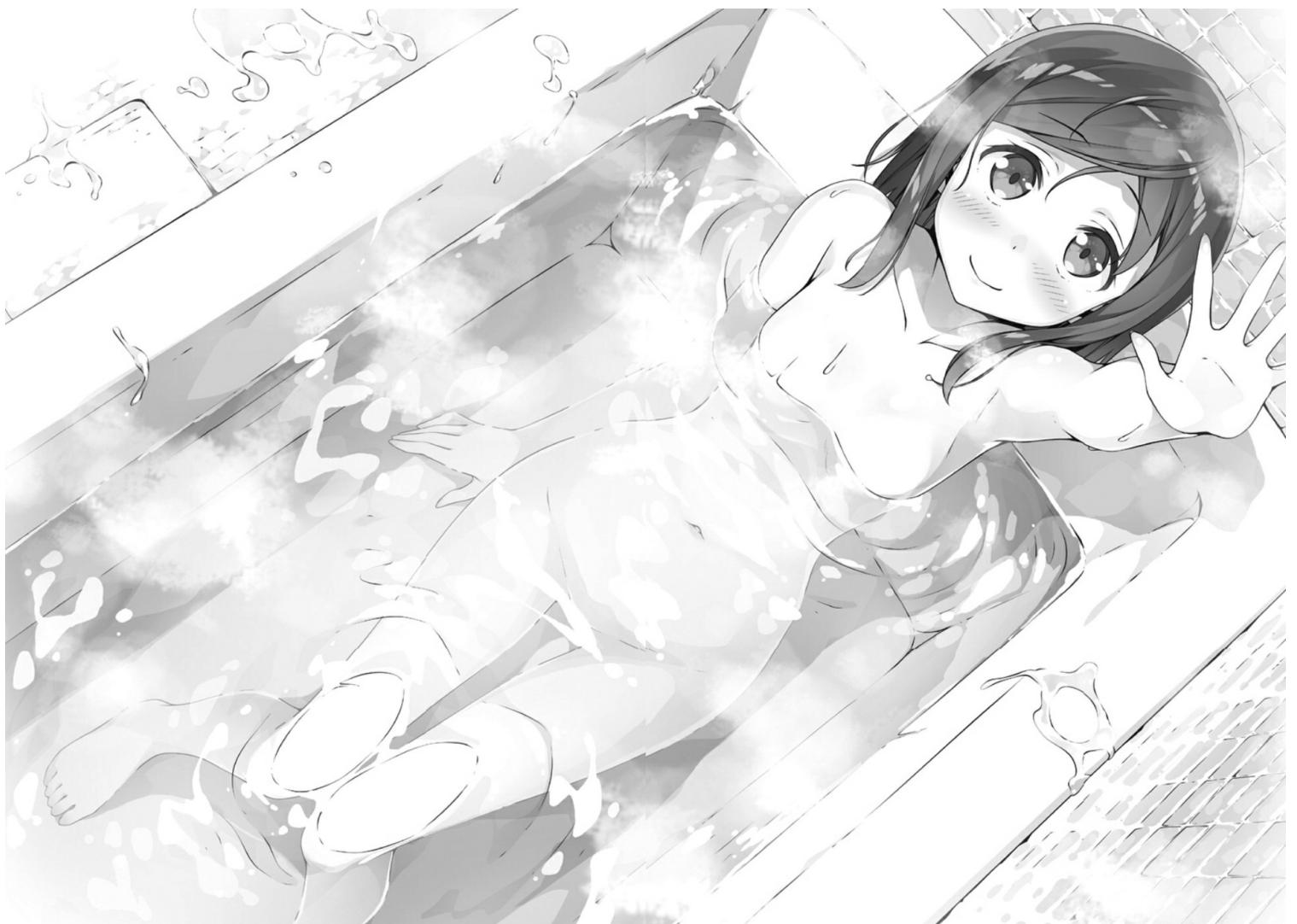
The brother’s words appeared again in Chihiro’s mind, and the lips loosened for some reason; at the same time, Chihiro felt a gripping pain.

—Little sister, huh...

Chihiro looked down at her bare chest.

They were a little smaller than average compared to those of the same gender...no, a lot smaller.

However, Chihiro’s chest certainly had lumps unique to girls.



Hashima Chihiro is a girl.

The older brother Itsuki has yet to know about this secret.

If only I have a little sister (Imouto sae ireba ii). I don't have one though.

Once Hashima Itsuki's world is turned upside down, how will the story develop?

At this point, nobody knows. [\[132\]](#)

羽

島

千

尋

【はしま・ちひろ】

年齢：16歳

伊月の父親の再婚相手の連れ子。弟だが
本当は妹。



パラメータ

学力

秘密

運動能力

生活力

人望

とんでもない
秘密を抱えた完璧超人

Afterword

There was this episode in the ‘Space Brothers’ manga. When the protagonist was younger, he talked about space with his friends, and everyone was really down about it. When he grew up to talk about space with his fellow astronauts, no matter how crazy the topic was, they were able to chat so passionately, and he was really gracious about it. There are times when I discuss novels, manga, video games and other form of entertainment with my fellow authors, and end up feeling the way as the protagonist of that manga. Other than very normal topics^[133] like the hearts of the characters, what the author wants to convey through the work, every prayer or shout in every line or scene, how the scene is depicted, how amazing the character build is, whether ‘push’ or ‘knock down’ is better, whether ‘draft’ or ‘manuscript’ is better, ‘unko’ or ‘unchi’,^[134] “There’s the term ‘panties’ at the opening of this work, and though ‘panty’ feel more comical, will Itsuki actually use the term ‘panty?’”^[135] and others, there are some topics that aren’t helpful at all, like “Which one gets people turned on more, fully naked or half naked?”, “The servant I came up with.”^[136], “If I’m summoned to a different world as a world.”, adults of various ages are able to be so enthusiastic about them. Nobody will say stuff like “It’s just a light novel, why so serious?”, “It’s just a manga, why so serious?”, “It’s just an anime, why so serious?”, “It’s just a fictional work, why so serious?” and stuff. It’s because everyone gets too serious talking about stuff that there are situations of people fighting, and even my hands tapping at the keyboard are stained in blood. Going fully naked is the best.^[137] Why can’t others understand? That’s why all pretty girls have to be shown in their original state...

“Don’t take your hobby as a form of work, because you won’t be able to simply enjoy your hobby.” This can be considered a common saying, and it does have its logic. Once work begins, it’s never easy, and whatever we encounter may not be all smooth sailing. A love comedy that can be read with relaxed feelings^[138] is produced by the vomited blood of the author. I do often encounter many situations of such people who knew of such a truth and

couldn't laugh heartily. However, some new perspectives are only obtained through starting work. It is an interesting to share our thoughts with people with the same perspectives. Whether it's space or novels, it's a wonderful thing to find something we really like and use it as work, even if there are many negative elements in them.^[139] I nearly got crushed by the unpleasant reality, but surely I'm able to continue struggling on this world because I like the ones I know on this world, the people I could only know of by living here, more than light novels themselves.

I'm more serious about fictional stories—I really do treat the courage and justice and infatuation and love and friendship and dreams and hopes and kindness depicted in the stories with much seriousness—it is a wonderful thing to interact with such abnormal yet interesting people, and I shall continue to deal with fictional stories seriously. In this sense, the story of 'If only I have a little Sister' is a selfish love letter of about a hundred thousand words that's without much point. Of course, this is a fictional piece of work that has nothing to do with actual people and organizations. However, emotionally, it is a real story. I hope readers can obtain a little joy from this book.

colleagues who helped to publish this work, everyone who was willing to write recommendations, and the many readers who help support this book and my prior works. And also to the friends who always joined me, my drinking buddies and colleagues, thank you for participating in my life. I would have been too shy to say such words if not for this occasion. Please continue to take care of me.

L. O. V. E!

From the silver haired fully naked pretty girl author, Hirasaka Yomi.^[140]

Take note: When playing TRPGs, unless every player during a session is a friend of yours, any dirty jokes and sexual harassment is to be kept to the minimum. Go all out when playing, but please don't forget to limit yourself while enjoying the game!

Illustrator's Afterword



Thank you for reading until the very end.

This is the illustrator Kantoku.

In this daily life of an actual author, there is a blend of some pretty unrealistic elements, and the chemistry triggered by these two is really interesting.

I suppose this is the kind of work I'm seeking... Personally, I like dirty jokes, so I was laughing throughout this volume.

I really put in a lot of effort designing the characters of this work. Designing Chihiro in particular left me really troubled.

I never drew a work with a little sister as a heroine, so when I read the title of the book, I thought I could have handled it well. I never expected the character to be as simple as I thought. I feel ashamed for the pre-existing thoughts!

After drawing this first volume, I'm finally starting to grasp the flavour of this work.

Please continue to take care of me!

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Translator's Notes and References

1. ↑ Bread(パン) and Pantsu(パンツ) are only one character apart in Japanese. But one should never make such a mistake.
2. ↑ The kanji for imouto(妹) was used, but pronounced monster. I guess in the end it's a little sister that stands out from all little sisters after all.
3. ↑ For the few of you who have not seen/read the series, Kirino is notorious for her rude attitude towards her brother. Literally the most tsundere character I know, and I personally didn't even realise she liked Kyousuke until literally the last book. Looking back, I think I missed some obvious signs though.
4. ↑ Ria-juu, Internet slang constructed from リアル (real) + 充実 (fulfill), describes a person with a successful and fulfilling life, exact opposite of hikkikomori.
5. ↑ Yes, these aren't typos. Google them, and get drunk. The Christmas one is more often called Noel, but since the infamous drunkard Yomi is the one writing this, can't beat him on such logic
6. ↑ side dishes that are typically accompanied with alcohol
7. ↑ oyatsu
8. ↑ It's a low wooden table with a blanket and table over it, and a heater under it. Notable for being so comfy, it draws people into the shadow realm
9. ↑ For the curious: https://belgiuminabox.com/shop/9782-thickbox_default/gouden-carolus-glass-33-cl-.jpg
10. ↑ Yes, it's a Non Non Biyori reference to Renge.
11. ↑ Yes, no honorific. I'm keeping it as onii because we have too many onii-

chans and BASED onii-samas in this story anyway (and the previous translator left it as such)

12. ↑ ハゲヅラ, the bald cap people wear when cosplaying as a bald/balding, middle aged guy

13. ↑ Gero.

Refers to the disgusting sound that frogs make, or the puking thing.

Same ゲロas the one used for ゲロ子, aka, pukey from D-frag

14. ↑ Moteneba.

15. ↑ By the way, the actual reason, as far as I see on the internet, is that the man was an ex-Navy soldier who was shipwrecked with crewmates. Some died of starvation, and the rest stayed alive by having ‘Turtle Soup’.

When the man tasted the real ‘Turtle Soup’, he realized he ate his crewmates, and killed himself out of guilt.

16. ↑ 14500BC to 300BC in Japan

17. ↑ 締め切り

18. ↑ Kani’s name can also be read as ‘Crab’

19. ↑ This is soooo...a Anavel Gato shoutout

20. ↑ Like, 好きis suki. A farming hoe, 鋤is a homophone.

21. ↑ The original has it as, ‘you can feel my breasts’, and Itsuki’s reply amounts to ‘Hi-Sour? Underaged kids aren’t allowed to drink beer’.

Hi-Sour is a type of Sour beer

22. ↑ Well, the original has it as nakadashi, and I’m not going to tell you what that means. All good kids shouldn’t ask for this. Of course, Nakata is the last name to George, Jouji Nakata, aka, Kirei Kirei

23. ↑ Occult Maiden is a cellphone game developed by Square Enix, and has Hirasaka Yomi as the scenario writer, which is then adapted into two different manga.

24. ↑ It was said that when the famous author Natsume Soseki was a teacher, after hearing a student translate ‘I love you’ into Japanese, he felt the line did not fit Japanese sensibility, that they were more indirect in their words, and thus, he translated it into ‘The moon is beautiful’ instead.

25. ↑ Tama can refer to egg or testicles.

26. ↑ As a reminder, Kani, the last name for Nayuta, is a homophone for crab

27. ↑ A.k.a. Fukuzama Yukichi, Meiji era philosopher. This quote is derived from his book ‘An Encouragement to Learning.’

28. ↑ It’s a work by the same author of this series, before Haganai was written

29. ↑ I don’t feel any soft fluffy feeling here. Do you?

30. ↑ Woe to those who end up with Aqua

31. ↑ There’s a pun on this one. I’m not going to comment more on this.

32. ↑ If the base has been purple, I want to file a lawsuit

33. ↑ Literally means plump ass

34. ↑ Chairman, is that you?

35. ↑ What is this? NGNL?

36. ↑ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinsuko>

37. ↑ I would have noted that the ‘naked’ part will be a strikeout, if not for the fact that Nayuta’s somehow naked at least twice per volume

38. ↑ If I were the editor-in-charge, I’ll be calling the ero manga companies to take you in instead...!

39. ↑ Jimbei please...

40. ↑ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IzqLX_KVK0Q

41. ↑ Japanese Society for Rights of Authors, Composers and Publishers

42. ↑ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Takuro_\(musician\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Takuro_(musician))

43. ↑ True story in Sapporo...which Toyoko Inn?

44. ↑ Jim Marshall, please...
45. ↑ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3hqnKt7s-bU>
46. ↑ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jingisukan> Grilled mutton dish
47. ↑ Hmm, sounds familiar. Oh wait, that's me.
48. ↑ Make your cover illustration a meme, like the oreimo covers.
49. ↑ This being something to be animated, it'll probably be easily patched up
50. ↑ Hunter X Hunter PTSD
51. ↑ You had Buriki and now Kantoku for illustrations man...
52. ↑ To remind readers, who definitely have the memory of a goldfish, this person he wants to surpass is Nayuta
53. ↑ Crab - Kani in Japanese
54. ↑ Awamori, a local alcohol to Okinawa. Shiroi Koibito, White lover, a trademark confectionary biscuit from Hokkaido. The latter's delicious.
55. ↑ SanktGallen, a Japanese brewery company (TN Snark: Grand Blue, here we come)
56. ↑ See, Satou Kazuma
57. ↑ Salonpas, a Japanese relief patch brand
58. ↑ Fujoshis. Fujoshis everywhere...
59. ↑ <https://order.royceconfectusa.com/> Yes, I'm telling you guys to buy it, it's good...except it's not halal
60. ↑ Obligatory, Giri choco
61. ↑ Godiva chocolates, a brand from Belgium
62. ↑ handsome guy
63. ↑ Oh no, Cashley's gone
64. ↑ Must be referring to Crab as an exception
65. ↑ Emerald or blue? Author, make up your mind...
66. ↑ Little Sister Magic can also be read as 'mahou'

67. ↑ I quoted this from patton

68. ↑ Kyon kun denwa. Left it as such for nostalgia

69. ↑ Grand Crest Replay, a novel franchise under the Fujimi Dragon Book series.

70. ↑ 早抜き can mean either ‘had breakfast’, or that.

71. ↑ GAGAGA is the name of the publisher of this book, and the publisher of Oregairu.

72. ↑ A very perverted monk.

73. ↑ So, killed by truck-kun. Got it.

74. ↑
<https://media.tenor.co/images/ae6d71cdb35082ac7a77afe20aad28c4/raw>

75. ↑ Q: Tell me. Are you a boy? Are you a girl? A: Hideyoshi

76. ↑ oh stupid goddess...

77. ↑ Biribiri please. You invaded China enough to have them name their version of niconico after you, have a basketball team owned by Yao Ming be called the Shanghai Bilibili Sharks, and now this? Death, taxes and Mikoto winning first place on Konosugoi girls ranking.

78. ↑ But you’re releasing under GAGAGA, that’s worse...

79. ↑ Chihiro, you forgot the fukou da...

80. ↑ By logic, you two are supposed to be paired together.

81. ↑ <https://img.fireden.net/a/image/1445/74/1445749517334.jpg>

82. ↑ I think calling yourself Tsukiko is already a strike...

83. ↑ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E-SbkgGjPPo>

84. ↑ Those Konosugoi rankings....I remember people are like ‘look here for who’s ranked higher than Re:Zero’ for last year’s rankings...then again, this work has nothing to complain about. 14th for the 2016 rankings and 12th for 2017 without an anime...and it outranks Eromanga-sensei. Take that =P.

85. ↑ Mya-san, trying to gain popularity points like Mikoto isn't going to work like that...then again, you're a tsundere like tsunbiri
86. ↑ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4arSl63G694>
87. ↑ Prepares to light flammable water.
88. ↑ Onizuka-GTO, is that you?
89. ↑ I want some oolong tea.
90. ↑ Because the ones who write eroge lines are most probably guys anyway...
91. ↑ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ktB7fpuf69M>
92. ↑ Berserk antagonist.
93. ↑ We should just rename the spell as 'explosion' or something.
94. ↑ FUKOU DAAAAA!!!
95. ↑ Jaldabaoth, in this extent, is a reference to Super Robot Wars.
96. ↑ Lelouch has become Luluko
97. ↑ Ah...the DxD special...
98. ↑ How perfect it is that it's a pervert saying it to a Mikoto wannabe...
99. ↑ Fans want their fanservice, you're the (body) sacrifice
- .00. ↑ For copyright reasons, we're going to provide fanservice instead
- .01. ↑ Dakara boku wa, H ga dekinai...
- .02. ↑ I want to refute the innocent part...
- .03. ↑ Bruh...
- .04. ↑ You're still a kid, Nayuta...
- .05. ↑ anything more, and it'll be a different publisher...
- .06. ↑ And for the inevitable Silver Link anime, please refer to Fate/Prisma Illya
- .07. ↑ Not sure if Lusty Crab or Shiguma Rika now...
- .08. ↑ Rape goes both ways right...? This is basically a Kuroko and Mikoto fanfic

now...

- .09. ↑ Mya-chan, you should have stopped when you had the chance...
- .10. ↑ So you don't mind going all the way or something? This is a Shounen LN...not like the attached illustration would have helped...
- .11. ↑ I think most readers are begging for you two to continue...then again, I left due to an insistence against nsfw, so...
- .12. ↑ If it's this crazy now, I don't want to think what the 'Scenery' series is like. I used to think it would be something similar to oregairu, but man...
- .13. ↑ And thus the legend of the Lusty Crab
- .14. ↑ Took you long enough. Of course you'll end up as an author...
- .15. ↑ Dress break?
- .16. ↑ just...
- .17. ↑ Do the GTA jailbreak lol
- .18. ↑ What's there to explain...
- .19. ↑Nayuta, your priorities man...
- .20. ↑ More like a stimulation...
- .21. ↑ I don't think anyone decent would use the word 's***' here...
- .22. ↑ Ono, it's Ashley. RIP.
- .23. ↑ Amazing, you never met her and you got her personality pat down.
- .24. ↑ Oh, glad you know this
- .25. ↑ Looks at further novel illustrations. Hmmmm.....
- .26. ↑ We call that "Need glasses"
- .27. ↑ Pot, meet black
- .28. ↑ You're the boss, there's no need for the 'please' part.
- .29. ↑ let's put an appropriate ringtone here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bzWSJG93P8>
- .30. ↑ The interesting part is about you becoming a full blown masochist.

- .31. ↑ Not sure if LN or eroge...
- .32. ↑ Given that Kanemoto Hisako is going to voice the lusty crab, I find it appropriate to post this as a likely reaction from all the readers:
<http://i1.kym-cdn.com/photos/images/original/000/609/260/ab7.jpg>
- .33. ↑ Your definition of normal, sir?
- .34. ↑ Both 'unko' and 'unchi' mean poop, the latter term being more normal
- .35. ↑ The first panties is read as pantsu, the second panties is read as pantie
- .36. ↑ Fate series
- .37. ↑ Sighs...
- .38. ↑ I doubt I can classify haganai as light reading, more like suicide reading
- .39. ↑ RIP Yamaguchi-sensei
- .40. ↑ Now I know who Nayuta is based on...so this means that she won't win
- .41. ↑ Lemme guess, you thought she was Tsukiko for real?

Imouto Sae Ireba Ii — Volume 01

Author: Hirasaka Yomi

Illustrator: Kantoku

Translated by Teh Ping & Rishiki

Edited by Jayy
